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Welcome



It may seem as though we've only just recovered from all the excitement of Christmas, but with Easter being early this year, it's already time to turn our thoughts to baking for the next big event. I always enjoy baking at Easter as it's the perfect excuse to create the cutest cupcakes toppers, from adorable bunnies like our cover star to fun hatching chicks and characterful sheep. Who could resist? If you're struggling for inspiration for what to bake this year, we've got plenty of

designs to inspire you from page 11 – this section includes some great last-minute Valentine's Day recipes and Mother's Day treats for you to try too.

As Easter and chocolate go hand in hand, we've enlisted the help of champion chocolatier Ruth Hinks to share her 10 essential rules for getting the best results from chocolate, plus she introduces us to the basic principles of tempering and moulding to create a fantastic Easter nest cupcake decoration. You'll find all this from page 40. Plus we catch up with cupcake enthusiast Sarah Sibley on page 98, check out what you've been baking this month in our reader gallery on page 114, and discover how to transform tea from the nation's favourite drink into an essential cupcake ingredient on page 72. I hope you enjoy the issue, and don't forget to join us on Facebook or Twitter to share photos of your latest bakes.

Sally

Sally FitzGerald Senior Editor



Cover design
Easter bunny cupcake
photography
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Subscribe

Turn to page 32 to take advantage of our special offer to subscribe to *Food Heaven* and save 25% on the shop price.



FLOWER POWER

Make your best ever Mother's Day cupcakes with our guides to creating buttercream roses and sugar peonies from page 29.



TOP TIPS

CHOCOLATE

Discover the secret to getting the best results from chocolate in your baking with Ruth Hinks' 10 essential tips on page 40.



Catwalk cupcakes

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THE PERFECT CUPPA

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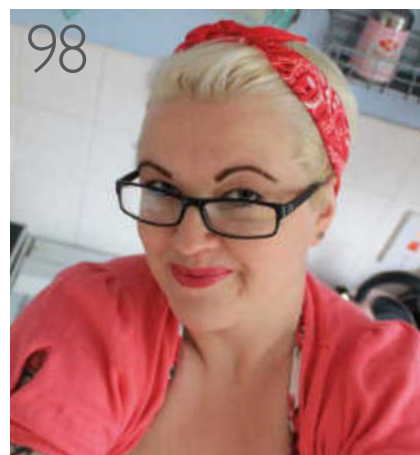
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The appeal of afternoon tea

As part of Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in March, The Eve Appeal, the UK's only gynaecological cancer research charity, holds an annual Make Time for Tea campaign to help raise vital funds and awareness of ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer accounts for more UK deaths than all the other gynaecological cancers put together. Every year over 7,100 women are diagnosed in the UK and around 4,200 will die. That's one woman dying every two hours. We know that earlier detection can make a critical difference to the women who are diagnosed. That's where you can help – by holding your own tea party this March to help raise funds. When you register you will receive a free fundraising pack containing everything you need to start planning your event, including invitations, information about The Eve Appeal and a materials order form.

Who would your ideal tea party guest be? We've been asking celebrities for theirs...

Lorraine Kelly "My ideal tea guest would be Julie Walters. She's funny, warm and witty with a heart of gold and she'd be a joy to spend time with."

Arlene Phillips "My ideal party guest would be Fred Astaire to ask him to take me in his arms and dance with me."

To register for Make Time for Tea you can visit www.eveappeal.org.uk/tea, call 020 7605 0100 or email tea@eveappeal.org.uk



WIN! Colour Splash Food Colours

To experiment with transforming plain cakes into eye-catching works of art, Colour Splash Food Colouring Gels are perfect. Available in 29 colours, they're easy to use and come in 25g (1 oz) tubes with fine nozzles to slowly release the gel for a more precise application to achieve the perfect shade. Ideal for baking coloured cakes, you can also use them with fondant, buttercream, glacé and royal icings. The full range is available from www.craftcompany.co.uk. One lucky reader can win a complete set (worth £56.55) – just answer the question below, then enter* online at www.foodheavenmag.com



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Q How many colours are in the Colour Splash Gels range?

A 15 B 26 C 29

*Full terms and conditions on page 6.

Baked with love

Busy planning what to do for your Valentine's Day cupcakes? We love these new Red & White Polka Dot Baking Cups from CakeCraftWorld. A great alternative to paper cases, they're pretty, sturdy and can be placed directly onto a baking tray, rather than having to use a muffin tin. A pack of 24 costs £2.95. Once you've baked your cakes, apply the perfect finishing touch with Love Decopics, £1.80 for a pack of 12. Buy the cups and Decopics online at www.cakecraftworld.co.uk



Orla Kiely helps Sport Relief

Need a new apron? We have just the thing as 'queen of print' Orla Kiely has created a limited edition textile range to raise money for Sport Relief 2016! Orla says, "I was delighted to be asked to design the range to support Sport Relief 2016 and hope the products will carry the Sport Relief message into tens of thousands of kitchens and help change countless lives. With the theme of kitchens and baking in mind, the range picks up on fruit with the Orla Kiely iconic pear print, encouraging everyone to be a sport and bake themselves proud." The apron will be presented each night to winners of *The Great Sport Relief Bake Off* and is available exclusively from HomeSense, TK Maxx stores, tkmaxx.com and sportrelief.com. The apron costs £12.99 with at least £5.25 going to Sport Relief.



All wrapped up

Cupcake wrappers are a wonderful way to add an eye-catching finishing touch to your cupcakes for a special occasion, and Ink Pudding has designed a beautiful option for Easter with its Cupcake Wrappers in Bunny Pattern, which guarantee to give your bakes the wow factor. There are plenty of other designs to choose from, including Matryoshka Russian dolls and puppies. Get a pack of 12 for £6.95 from www.notonthehighstreet.com



Mums Bake Cakes

A nationwide network of local home bakers making and delivering cakes for special occasions is the dream and new business of Paula Wilkinson, through her new Mums Bake Cakes venture. To make it happen Paula needs your help, "I want a network of mums around the country who love making cakes at home and help them make some money as well." Paula's website portal means individual bakers don't need a site of their own, they pay a small registration fee, take a photo of their best cakes and upload them to the website. For more information and to sign up visit the website www.mumsbakecakes.co.uk



May the cupcakes be with you!

Have your friends and family gone *Star Wars* crazy since the latest film was released? Impress them by baking some cupcakes using the new range of *Star Wars* baking goodies from Lakeland. There's a whole range of products available including 48 Cupcake Cases (£3.35), a Cupcake Kit featuring two designs of cupcake cases and four different themes of toppers (£9.98) and an R2D2 Cake Stand for 12 cupcakes (£11.27). Buy in your local Lakeland store or get them online at www.lakeland.co.uk



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Occasions

CUPCAKES

Easter





Vintage rose Mother's Day cupcake bouquet

By Rainbow Dust Colours Ltd (www.rainbowdust.co.uk)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

12 silver baking cases

175g (6oz) Stork margarine

175g (6oz) caster sugar

2 medium free-range eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

225g (8oz) plain flour

2 tsp baking powder

125ml (4½ fl oz) plain yoghurt

175g (6oz) desiccated coconut

FOR THE TOPPING

500g (1lb 1oz) Stork margarine

1kg (2lb 2oz) icing sugar

Rainbow Dust ProGel – pink

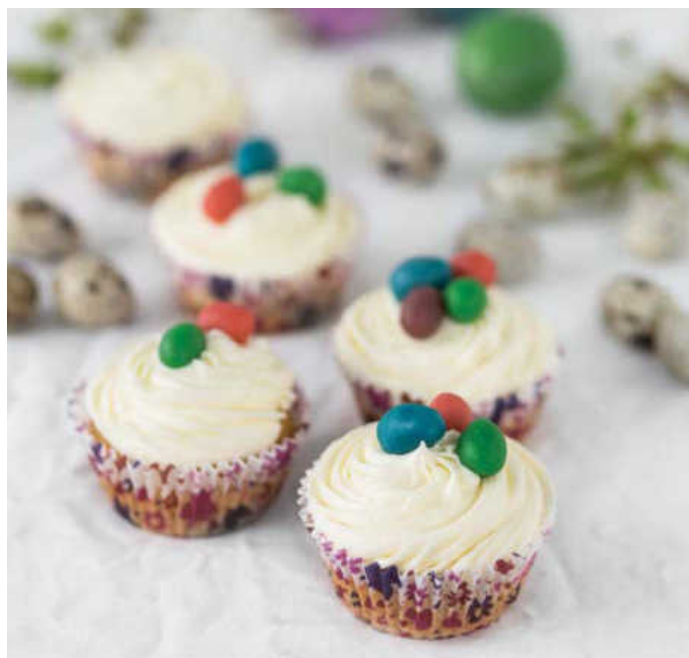
TO DECORATE

sugarpaste rose petal leaves

Rainbow Dust Edible Glitter – pastel pink

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place 12 silver cupcake cases into a muffin tin. In a mixing bowl, cream together the margarine and sugar until light and fluffy, then beat in the eggs and vanilla extract.
- 2** Sift together the baking powder and flour. Gently fold this into the mixture, adding the yoghurt, until combined. Lastly, add the coconut until evenly mixed.
- 3** Spoon the mixture into the cases and bake for 25-30 minutes, until golden brown. Leave in the tin for 10 minutes before placing on a wire rack to cool.
- 4** For the topping, beat the margarine in a mixing bowl, adding the sifted icing sugar and beat until light and fluffy. Add a small amount of pink ProGel and mix in well, until the colour is even.
- 5** Place the topping into a piping bag with a 1M piping tube, then pipe swirls to resemble roses on top of your cupcakes. Add a sprinkling of pink glitter and a sugar rose leaf to complete your cupcakes.
- 6** The finished cupcakes can then be arranged how you want, or like we have done using a pot shaped dummy covered in sugarpaste, then placed onto a cake drum board, adding your own choice of decoration. Arrange the cupcakes on top using cocktail sticks and royal icing at the bottom of each cupcake to secure them in place, then add bunches of dried gypsophila, trailing ivy leaves and leaf bear grass to complement your display of rose cupcakes.





Marzipan egg Easter cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 150g (5oz) butter
- 150g (5oz) caster sugar
- 150g (5oz) self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 3 free-range eggs
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE VANILLA CREAM

- 300ml (1 fl oz) double cream
- 2-3 tbsp icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

TO DECORATE

coloured marzipan

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2 Put all the cupcake ingredients into a mixing bowl and whisk with an electric whisk until smooth. Alternatively, beat well with a wooden spoon.
- 3 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and risen. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4 For the vanilla cream, whisk together all the ingredients until thick but not stiff. Spoon into a piping bag and pipe on top of the cakes.
- 5 Decorate with marzipan broken into tiny pieces and formed into egg shapes.



Pistachio and rose cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 225g (8oz) self-raising flour
- 110g (4oz) butter
- 110g (4oz) caster sugar
- 100g (3½oz) chopped pistachios
- 1 large free-range egg, beaten
- ½-1 tbsp milk

FOR THE FROSTING

- 3 free-range egg whites
 - 5 tbsp water
 - 180g (6oz) caster sugar
 - 200g (7oz) butter, diced
- TO DECORATE**
- crystallised rose petals

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2 Sift the flour into a mixing bowl and rub in the butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar and pistachios.
- 3 Beat in the egg and enough milk to give a stiff dropping consistency.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 15-20 minutes until golden and a skewer or cocktail stick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 For the meringue frosting, whisk the egg whites until stiff.
- 6 Heat the water and sugar in a pan until the sugar has dissolved. Heat to 118-120°C (235-240°F) until a little of the mixture can be rolled into a soft ball between your finger and thumb when dropped into cold water, but not turned into a caramel.
- 7 Slowly trickle the sugar into the egg whites, whisking constantly until cooled. Gradually whisk in the butter until incorporated.
- 8 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe a thick heart on each cake. Decorate with crystallised rose petals.



Recipes and photography on pages 14-15 © Stockfood

Fondant heart cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 300ml (1 fl oz) milk
- 80ml (3 fl oz) sunflower oil
- a few drops of vanilla extract
- 1 large free-range egg
- 225g (8oz) plain flour
- 150g (5oz) caster sugar
- 40g (1½oz) cocoa powder
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 100g (3½oz) chocolate chips

TO DECORATE

- 350g (12oz) white sugarpaste
- red paste food colouring
- icing sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Place paper cases into a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Whisk together the milk, oil, vanilla and egg.
- 3 Sift the dry ingredients into a mixing bowl. Stir in the milk mixture until just combined. Gently stir in the chocolate chips.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for about 20 minutes, until a skewer or cocktail stick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place onto a wire rack and allow to cool completely.
- 5 Divide the sugarpaste into two equal portions.
- 6 Knead a little food colouring into one portion to make it a pale pink colour.
- 7 Knead more food colouring into another portion to make it into a red colour.
- 8 Roll out the sugarpastes separately on a work surface dusted with icing sugar.
- 9 Cut out heart shapes with a cutter or card template. Brush lightly with water and place on top of the cakes. Alternatively, make some chocolate buttercream, spread a thin layer over the cooled cupcakes and press the hearts on top.



Recipe © Stockfood, photography © iStock Photo

Hatching chick cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 100g (3½oz) plain chocolate**
- 200g (7oz) self-raising flour**
- 225g (8oz) light brown sugar**
- 6 tbsp cocoa powder**
- 150ml (5fl oz) sunflower oil**
- 100ml (3½fl oz) soured cream**
- 2 free-range eggs**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract**
- 100ml (3½fl oz) warm water**

FOR THE GRASS

- 140g (5oz) unsalted butter**
- 350g (12oz) icing sugar**
- 140ml (5fl oz) crème fraîche**

- ½ tsp vanilla extract**
- green food colour paste/gel**

FOR THE NESTS

- 100g (3½oz) plain chocolate**
- 3 tbsp chocolate spread**
- 4 tsp sunflower oil**
- 450g (16oz) white marzipan**
- cocoa powder**

FOR THE CHICKS

- 200-250g (7-9oz) yellow sugarpaste**
- 24 chocolate chips**
- 12 small orange sweets**
- 100-150g (3½-5oz) white sugarpaste**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole deep bun or muffin tin.
- 2** Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering (not boiling) water. Whisk the flour, sugar, cocoa, oil, soured cream, eggs, vanilla and water until smooth. Whisk in the melted chocolate.
- 3** Spoon into the paper cases and bake for about 20 minutes until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.

- 4** For the grass, beat the butter until soft. Sift in the icing sugar and beat until smooth. Beat in the crème fraîche, vanilla and food colouring until blended.
- 5** Spoon into a piping bag with a leaf or grass nozzle. Pipe on top of the cakes, starting at the outside edge and working in circles, pulling up and away when a buttercream strand is long enough.
- 6** For the nests, put the chocolate and chocolate spread in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering (not boiling) water, until the chocolate has melted.
- 7** Remove from the heat and stir in the oil until smooth.
- 8** Knead the marzipan until softened, then knead in the chocolate mixture until an even brown.
- 9** Knead lightly on a surface dusted with cocoa powder and roll pieces between cocoa-dusted hands into long thin strips. You need 3-4 strips for each cake.
- 10** Intertwine the strips and form into round nest shapes. Place on top of the grass and chill while you make the chicks.
- 11** Roll 12 small balls of yellow sugarpaste for the chicks. Mould 24 small ovals for the wings and flatten slightly. Attach to each side of the yellow balls with a dab of water. Press two chocolate chips into each ball for eyes and a sweet for the beaks.
- 12** Shape 12 flat discs of white sugarpaste for eggshells. Tear off small pieces at the back, front and sides to make broken eggshell shapes.
- 13** Brush the base of the yellow balls with a little water and attach to the centres of the eggshells. Carefully place on top of the chocolate marzipan nests and leave to dry.

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Easter cupcakes

Makes 20-30

FOR THE BISCUITS

110g (4oz) unsalted butter

110g (4oz) caster sugar

1 free-range egg, beaten

1 tsp vanilla extract

280g (10oz) plain flour

FOR THE ICING

350g (12oz) royal icing sugar

water

green paste food colouring

pink paste food colouring

FOR THE CUPCAKES

110g (4oz) butter

110g (4oz) caster sugar

2 free-range eggs, beaten

110g (4oz) self-raising flour

1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

55g (2oz) unsalted butter

100ml (3½fl oz) whipping cream

½ tsp vanilla extract

350g (12oz) icing sugar

TO DECORATE

orange sugar sprinkles

mini sugar eggs

- 1** For the biscuits, preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Line two large baking trays with non-stick baking paper.
- 2** Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until soft and creamy. Gradually beat in the egg and vanilla. Add the flour and mix to form a dough.
- 3** Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to a thickness of 1 cm (½in). Using a leaf-shaped card template or cookie cutter, cut 12 biscuits out of the dough and place on the baking tray.
- 4** Cut 24 oval shapes, for the ears, of varying sizes from the remaining dough and place on the baking tray.
- 5** Bake for 8-10 minutes, until pale golden brown. Cool on the baking trays for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6** For the icing, sift the icing sugar into a bowl and beat in just enough water to make a smooth, thick icing. Divide the icing between three mixing bowls.
- 7** Beat green food colouring into one bowl and pink into another bowl, leaving one bowl white. Cover the pink and green bowls with a damp cloth.
- 8** Spoon the white icing into a piping bag and pipe onto the oval shapes. Leave to set.
- 9** Spoon the green icing into a piping bag and pipe onto the leaf shapes, as in the photo, and leave to set.
- 10** Spoon the pink icing into a piping bag and pipe onto the set icing on the ears, as in the photo. Leave to set.
- 11** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in mini cupcake tins and larger muffin tins.
- 12** Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs until well blended.
- 13** Sift in the flour and fold in gently with the vanilla, until just combined.
- 14** Spoon into the cases and bake for 10-15 minutes for the mini cupcakes and 20-25 minutes for the larger cupcakes, until golden and springy to the touch. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 15** For the buttercream, beat the butter until soft and creamy. Beat in the cream and vanilla until blended.
- 16** Sift in the icing sugar and beat until smooth.
- 17** Spoon half the mixture into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe on top of 12 cakes.
- 18** Spread the remaining buttercream over the remaining cakes and decorate with orange sprinkles.
- 19** Insert the ears into the piped buttercream and the leaves into the orange sprinkle cakes.
- 20** Place on a serving plate with mini sugar eggs.





Carrot and pineapple cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 225g (8oz) sugar
- 150ml (5fl oz) sunflower oil
- 2 free-range eggs, beaten
- 175g (6oz) plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp salt
- 50g (1½oz) carrots, finely grated
- 225g (8oz) crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE CREAM CHEESE TOPPING

- 225g (8oz) cream cheese
- 300g (11oz) icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp milk, if needed

TO DECORATE

- marzipan carrots
- icing sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Stir together the sugar, oil and eggs in a mixing bowl until thoroughly combined.
- 3 Sift the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, cinnamon and salt into a separate bowl.
- 4 Stir the flour mixture into the liquid ingredients until they are thoroughly moistened.
- 5 Mix in the carrots, pineapple and vanilla.
- 6 Pour into the paper cases, filling them to the top.
- 7 Bake for 20-25 minutes, until firm to the touch. Remove from the tins and place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 8 For the cream cheese topping, beat the cream cheese until soft. Sift in the icing sugar; add the vanilla and beat until smooth. Add milk if the mixture is too stiff.
- 9 Spoon onto the cupcakes. Decorate with marzipan carrots and sift a little icing sugar over the top.

Valentine's red velvet cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 140g (5oz) self-raising flour
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- a pinch of salt
- 110ml (4fl oz) buttermilk
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp red food colouring
- 50g (1½oz) butter
- 175g (6oz) caster sugar
- 1 free-range egg

FOR THE FROSTING

- 85g (3oz) unsalted butter
- 125g (4½oz) cream cheese
- 110-155g (4-5½oz) icing sugar
- 100g (3½oz) white chocolate
- blue paste food colouring

TO DECORATE

- candy hearts
- sugar pearls

- 1 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2 Stir together the flour, cocoa, bicarbonate of soda and salt and set aside. In another bowl, mix the buttermilk, vinegar, vanilla and red food colouring.

- 3 Beat together the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until pale and fluffy. Beat in the egg a little at a time.
- 4 Mix in a third of the flour mixture, followed by half the buttermilk mixture, then another third of the flour; the remaining buttermilk and finally the last of the flour mixture.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases. Bake for about 20 minutes, until risen and springy to the touch. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the frosting, melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering (not boiling) water. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside.
- 7 Beat the butter until soft, then beat in the cream cheese and chocolate until smooth.
- 8 Gradually sift in the icing sugar, beating until thick and smooth. Put half the mixture into another bowl and stir in a little blue food colouring. Chill both mixtures until thick enough to pipe.
- 9 Spoon the blue and white creams side by side into a piping bag, so that the colours sit evenly next to each other inside the bag.
- 10 Pipe a swirl on each cake and decorate with candy hearts and sugar pearls.





Easter cupcakes with eggnog

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 175g (6oz) plain flour
- 110g (4oz) sugar
- ½ tbsp baking powder
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 150ml (5fl oz) eggnog
- 1 free-range egg

55g (2oz) butter, melted

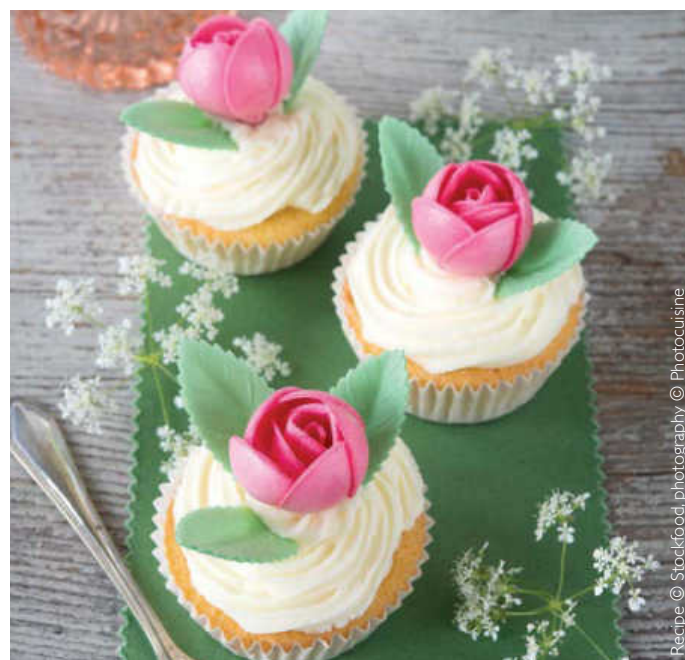
FOR THE CREAM CHEESE TOPPING

- 120g (4oz) unsalted butter
- 100g (3½oz) icing sugar
- 300g (11oz) cream cheese
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

TO DECORATE

mini sugar eggs

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Mix together the flour; sugar; baking powder and bicarbonate of soda in a mixing bowl.
- 3 Whisk together the egg and eggnog, then whisk in the butter.
- 4 Gently fold the egg mixture into the dry ingredients.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until risen and golden. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the topping, beat the butter until soft and creamy. Sift in the icing sugar and beat well. Beat in the cream cheese and vanilla until smooth. Chill for about 30 minutes to firm up the mixture.
- 7 Spoon the topping mixture into a piping bag and pipe on top of the cakes. Decorate with sugar eggs.



Mother's Day rose cupcakes

Makes 24

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 110g (4oz) butter
- 110g (4oz) caster sugar
- 2 free-range eggs, beaten
- 110g (4oz) self-raising flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE TOPPING

- 350ml (12fl oz) double cream
- 1-2 tbsp icing sugar
- 1-2 tbsp elderflower cordial

TO DECORATE

marzipan roses and leaves

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 24 mini muffin tin holes.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar until light and creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs until well blended.
- 3 Sift in the flour and fold in gently with the vanilla extract, until they are just combined.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 10-15 minutes until golden and springy to the touch. Place on a wire rack to allow to cool completely.
- 5 For the elderflower cream, whisk the cream and icing sugar until beginning to thicken. Whisk in the elderflower cordial to taste and whisk until thick.
- 6 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe a swirl on each cake.
- 7 Decorate with marzipan roses and leaves.



Recipe and photography © Stockfood

Hidden bunny Easter cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

150g (5oz) soft butter
150g (5oz) caster sugar
175g (6oz) self-raising flour
25g (1oz) cocoa powder
3 free-range eggs, beaten
a few drops of vanilla extract

FOR THE EARS

icing sugar
200g (7oz) white sugarpaste
100g (3½oz) pink sugarpaste

FOR THE ICING

225g (8oz) icing sugar
25g (1oz) cocoa powder
25g (1oz) sugar
3 tbsp water

TO DECORATE

marzipan carrots

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2** Beat together the butter, sugar, flour and cocoa powder in a mixing bowl. Gradually whisk in the beaten eggs and vanilla until smooth.
- 3** Spoon the mixture into the cases and bake for 15-20 minutes until risen and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes and then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4** For the ears, roll out the white sugarpaste on a surface dusted with icing sugar and cut out 12 pointed oval shapes, curling them slightly.
- 5** Roll out the pink sugarpaste and shape 12 smaller ovals. Brush the white ears with a little water and attach the pink oval shapes, as in the photo.
- 6** For the topping, sift the icing sugar into a bowl.
- 7** Heat the cocoa, sugar and water in a pan over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to a boil and remove from the heat.
- 8** Pour onto the icing sugar and beat until smooth. Use while warm as this frosting sets quickly.
- 9** Spread the frosting on top of each cake and insert the ears, as in the photo. Arrange marzipan carrots on top and leave to set.



Easter bunny cupcakes

Makes 12 cupcakes

FOR THE CUPCAKES

12 basic cupcakes (see page 113)

buttercream (see page 113)

TO DECORATE

pink sugarpaste

brown sugarpaste

orange sugarpaste

green sugarpaste

white sugarpaste

black sugarpaste

black edible ink pen

edible silver balls

- 1 Start by baking 12 cupcakes according to the instructions on page 113, or following your favourite recipe. Leave to cool completely.
- 2 Make a batch of buttercream and spread a little on top of each cupcake. You just want a light covering of buttercream to help the sugarpaste to stick.
- 3 Knead the pink sugarpaste in your hands until pliable. Roll out on a work surface lightly dusted with icing sugar to about 5mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) thick. Using a cutter the same size as your cupcakes, cut out 12 rounds and add to the top of the cupcakes. Press edible silver balls into the paste before it dries, following the photo for guidance on position. Cover the remaining pink sugarpaste with clingfilm and set aside.
- 4 Now it's time to make the rabbits. Knead the brown sugarpaste until pliable. For each rabbit, create a ball from the brown sugarpaste for the head. Using a much small piece of brown paste, divide in two, form elongated teardrops from each piece and flatten to make the ears. Repeat with the pink sugarpaste, making the teardrops smaller so they fit inside the brown ears. Fix in place with a drop of water. Attach to the head with a little water.
- 5 Roll a small round of white sugarpaste, flatten and stick onto the face. Draw on the nose and mouth using the edible ink pen. Form tiny balls from black sugarpaste and stick in place for the eyes.
- 6 For the paws, roll a small ball of brown sugarpaste and taper one end. Use a blunt knife to cut two lines in the bulbous end. Repeat for the second paw.
- 7 Form a carrot from orange sugarpaste and use a blunt knife to score marks all over. Roll out tiny strands of green paste and attach to the top of the carrot.
- 8 Finally, add the head, paws and carrot to the top of the cupcake, using water to fix in place and following the photo for guidance on the exact placement of each individual piece.



Photography © Shutterstock



Cherry heart cupcakes

By Stork (www.bakewithstork.com)

Makes 6

FOR THE CUPCAKES

2 free-range eggs

½ tsp vanilla extract

60g (2oz) dark chocolate

200g (7oz) caster sugar

30g (1oz) plain flour

125g (4oz) Stork with Butter

FOR THE CHERRY SAUCE

250g (9oz) stoned cherries

40g (1½oz) icing sugar

1 level tsp arrowroot (mixed with 1 tbsp water)

- 1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Line each hole of a 6-hole muffin tin with two doubled-up paper cases.
- 2** Melt the Stork and chocolate over a pan of simmering water. Stir in the sugar and vanilla extract and heat until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the heat.
- 3** Add the eggs one at a time and beat until smooth. Finally, add the flour and mix well.
- 4** Divide the mixture between the muffin cases. Bake for approximately 20 minutes.
- 5** For the sauce, warm up the cherries with the sugar until the sugar dissolves. Add the arrowroot and heat until the sauce thickens. Cool. Carve a heart shape in the baked and cooled cupcakes with a spoon or a knife.
- 6** Pour the cooled cherry gel into the heart shape, then cut out hearts of paper; place on the cupcakes and dust with icing sugar. Remove the paper.

Red velvet heart cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

175g (6oz) unsalted butter

335g (12oz) caster sugar

3 large free-range eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

280g (10oz) plain flour

2 tsp baking powder

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

a pinch of salt

200-225ml (7-8fl oz) milk

red food colouring

FOR THE FROSTING

2 tbsp unsalted butter

345g (12oz) white mini marshmallows

55ml (2fl oz) double cream

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin. Grease a 20cm (8in) square baking tin.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs and vanilla until well blended.
- 3 Sift in the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt and stir in gently, alternately with enough milk until blended, until the mixture is a soft dropping consistency.
- 4 Pour about 300ml (10fl oz) of the mixture into a smaller bowl and stir in the food colouring, a few drops at a time – the colour will lighten a little during baking.
- 5 Pour the red mixture into the square baking tin and bake for about 20 minutes, until a skewer or wooden cocktail stick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 Cut the red cake into 12 hearts with a 5cm (2in) heart-shaped cutter. Freeze for 20 minutes.
- 7 Spoon about 1 tbsp of the plain mix into the cases. Stand the hearts vertically, with the heart base pointing down into the mix.
- 8 Spoon more plain mixture on either side of the hearts, making sure that the mixture reaches roughly halfway up the paper cases, high enough to support the hearts (the mixture will rise), then spoon more mixture over the top of the hearts.
- 9 Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and risen. Cool in the tins for 10 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 10 For the frosting, put all the ingredients into a pan and heat gently, stirring until the marshmallows and butter have melted. Set aside to cool until thickened and spreadable.
- 11 Spread frosting on the cakes, swirling with a knife, and leave to set.





Recipe and photography © Stockfood

Hot cross bun cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

300g (11oz) self-raising flour

1 tsp mixed spice

½ tsp ground cinnamon

80g (3oz) light brown sugar

200g (7oz) sultanas, raisins and currants, mixed

2 free-range eggs, beaten

185ml (6½fl oz) milk

100g (3½oz) butter, melted

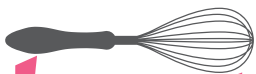
FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

100g (3½oz) cream cheese

50g (1¾oz) soft butter

100g (3½oz) icing sugar

- 1 For the cupcakes, preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Line a deep 12-hole muffin tin with tulip cases.
- 2 Sift the flour, mixed spice and cinnamon into a mixing bowl. Stir in the sugar and dried fruits. Make a well in the centre.
- 3 Mix together the egg, milk and butter. Pour into the well and stir until just combined.
- 4 Spoon into the cases and smooth the surface.
- 5 Bake for 15-20 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the centres comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the buttercream, beat together all the ingredients until creamy and pale.
- 7 Spoon into a piping bag with a star nozzle.
- 8 Pipe the buttercream in crosses on the cakes.



How to...

MAKE FABULOUS EDIBLE FLOWERS

Nothing tops off a cupcake as beautifully as a flower and with this masterclass you can create your own perfect edible blooms, just in time for Mother's Day...



Buttercream rose cupcakes

By Cake Craft World
(www.cakecraftworld.co.uk)

FOR THE CUPCAKES

petal tube no.123

buttercream

plastic piping bags

baked cupcakes

Sugarflair baby pink paste colouring

Once you know the technique, these beautiful rose cupcakes are really easy to create using the large petal tube no.123. Your buttercream must be the right consistency – a little firmer than normal, so that the petals stand up and hold their shape. Always pipe with the widest end of the tube facing the cupcake, so that the top of the petals appear finer. To make the rose really lifelike, use three different colours starting with the deepest tone in the centre of the rose.

- 1** Pipe one petal in the centre of the cupcake. Start by holding the petal tube at right angles against the cupcake and pipe one petal while turning the cupcake with your other hand. Overlap the petal on itself and finish by bringing the tube down flat against the cupcake.
- 2** Pipe three petals, still in the darkest colour, overlapping each other, but instead of starting with the tube at right angles, start piping horizontally so that you pipe up, over and down each time, finishing horizontally against the cupcake.
- 3** Pipe five petals overlapping each other, still in the darkest colour.
- 4** Pipe another circle of petals overlapping each other; then change colour to a slightly paler tone of buttercream and pipe another circle of seven petals. Notice that the petals are still standing upwards but beginning to unwrap from the bud.
- 5** Change to an even paler colour of buttercream and continue to pipe a circle of about seven petals. Because these petals are more open, still start and finish with the petal tube horizontal against the cupcake, but instead of piping up and down, pipe at a 45 degree angle. Pipe the last circle of petals almost flat against the cupcake.



Sugar peony flowers

By Cake Craft World
(www.cakecraftworld.co.uk)

FOR THE FLOWERS

Renshaw flower and modelling paste or flower paste

edible glue

FMM veining mats 5-8

26 gauge white wires

ball/bone tool

foam flower making pads

flower formers

bent head yellow lily stamens

white florist tape

FMM peony cutters

- 1** For the centre you will need three buds and some yellow bent head lily stamens. To make a bud, roll a small amount of flower paste into a teardrop shape. Take a 26 gauge white wire, bend the end into a tiny hook, dip in edible glue and insert into the bud. Leave the buds to dry hard overnight, then tape together with the stamens.
- 2** You need about six small, seven medium and nine large peony petals. Cut out a petal, dip the end of a 26 gauge white wire into edible glue and insert into the bottom of the petal, pushing to about half the way up.
- 3** Press a veining mat onto the petal. You may have to press one side then the other if the veining mat is not as large as the petal.
- 4** Place the petal onto a foam flower making pad and frill around the petal by pressing a bone or ball tool around the edge.
- 5** Leave to dry overnight in flower formers.
- 6** Using white florist tape, attach six small petals around the buds and stamens. Remember to pull the tape tight so that it stretches and becomes slightly sticky.
- 7** Add the ring of seven medium petals.
- 8** Lastly add the nine large petals, taping them as tight as you can to create the peony.

TIP For a closed peony, replace the centre with a large round bud. Take a ball of flower paste and insert a hooked white wire (24 gauge) dipped in edible glue. Leave overnight to dry hard, then wrap in layers of unwired small peony petals before adding larger wired petals. To make an unwired peony, start with a ball of flower paste and wrap in tight layers of small peony petals. Make the other petals as above, but without the wires and assemble using edible glue.



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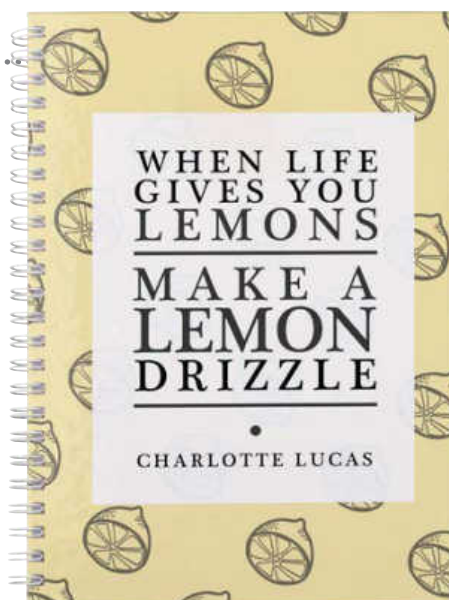


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Chocolate

CUPCAKES





Molten-centred chocolate cupcakes

By Love Food

Makes 8

FOR THE CUPCAKES

85g (3oz) self-raising flour

1 tbsp cocoa powder

55g (2oz) butter, softened

55g (2oz) caster sugar

1 large free-range egg

55g (2oz) plain chocolate

10g (1/4oz) icing sugar, for dusting

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Put eight paper cases in a bun tin.
- 2 Sift the flour and cocoa powder into a large bowl. Add the butter, caster sugar and egg and beat with a hand-held electric mixer until smooth.
- 3 Spoon half of the mixture into the paper cases. Using a teaspoon, make an indentation in the centre of each. Break the chocolate into eight squares and place a piece in each indentation, then spoon the remaining cake mixture on top.
- 4 Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, or until risen and firm to the touch. Leave the cupcakes in the tin for 2-3 minutes, then serve warm, dusted with the icing sugar.

Pink peppercorn and chocolate cupcakes

By Love Food

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

125g (4 1/2oz) plain flour

60g (2 1/4oz) cocoa powder

1 tsp baking powder

1/4 tsp salt

115g (4oz) unsalted butter, softened

200g (7oz) caster sugar

2 tsp vanilla extract

2 large free-range eggs

125ml (4fl oz) soured cream

1 tbsp pink peppercorns, crushed

FOR THE FROSTING

4 tbsp milk

1 tbsp pink peppercorns

115g (4oz) unsalted butter, softened

250g (9oz) icing sugar

2 tsp vanilla extract

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and line a 12-hole cupcake tin with paper cases.
- 2 Sift together the flour, cocoa, baking powder

and salt into a bowl. Put the butter and sugar in another bowl and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the vanilla, then the eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Add half the flour mix and the cream and beat until combined. Add the remaining flour and mix.

- 3 Spoon the batter into the paper cases and bake in the oven for 20 minutes, until risen and a cocktail stick inserted into the centre of a cake comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 1-2 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4 For the frosting, put the peppercorns and milk into a small saucepan and heat over a medium heat until just boiling. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for approximately 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Strain the milk into a bowl, discarding the peppercorns, and leave to cool for about 10 minutes.
- 5 Add the butter, icing sugar and vanilla to the milk and beat with a hand-held electric mixer until well combined. Add icing sugar, if necessary, to achieve a piping consistency. Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a star-shaped nozzle and pipe onto the cupcakes.
- 6 To decorate, sprinkle a little of the crushed pink peppercorns over the cake tops.



White chocolate and blackberry cupcakes

By Love Food

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 300g (10½oz) plain flour**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- 200g (7oz) caster sugar**
- 100g (3½oz) unsalted butter**
- 2 free-range eggs**
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract**
- 250ml (9fl oz) low-fat natural yoghurt**
- 200g (7oz) blackberries**
- 200g (7oz) white chocolate, chopped into chunks**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.
- 2** Sift together the flour, baking powder and sugar into a large bowl. In a separate bowl, beat together the butter, eggs, vanilla extract and yoghurt until combined.
- 3** Fold the egg mixture into the flour mixture until just combined. Stir in the blackberries and chocolate.
- 4** Spoon the mixture evenly into the paper cases in the tin and bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes until golden and cooked through. The cakes should bounce back when pressed gently with a finger. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.



Recipe and photography © Stockfood

Chocolate log and heart cupcakes

Makes 24

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 2 free-range eggs**
- 125g (4½oz) dark brown sugar**
- 125g (4½oz) unsalted butter, melted**
- 225ml (8fl oz) milk**
- ½ tsp vanilla extract**
- 225g (8oz) plain flour**
- 55g (2oz) cocoa powder**
- ½ tsp baking powder**

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

- 175g (6oz) plain chocolate**
- 225g (8oz) unsalted butter**
- 300g (11oz) icing sugar**
- a pinch of salt**
- 55ml (2fl oz) double cream**
- ½ tsp vanilla extract**

TO DECORATE

- edible gold metallic food paint or lustre powder**
- 6 chocolate covered fudge bars, each cut into four edible red hearts**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 24 mini muffin tin holes.
- 2** Whisk the eggs and sugar in a mixing bowl until well combined. Whisk in the butter and milk, then the vanilla. Sift in the flour, cocoa and baking powder and stir until blended.
- 3** Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 10-15 minutes, until just firm to the touch. Cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4** For the buttercream, melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering (not boiling) water. Set aside to cool.
- 5** Beat the butter until very soft. Sift in the icing sugar and salt and beat until smooth.
- 6** Whisk in the cream and vanilla until blended. Stir in the cooled chocolate, beating well until smooth. Chill until firm enough to spread.
- 7** Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe on the cakes.
- 8** Load an airbrush with the food paint using a 0.35 nozzle. Spray onto the buttercream. Alternatively, sprinkle with lustre powder.
- 9** Carefully place a piece of fudge bar and a heart on each cake.

Choc caramel cupcakes

Makes 24

- | FOR THE CUPCAKES | FOR THE ICING |
|--|---|
| 150g (5oz) plain flour | 400g (14oz) light brown sugar |
| 2 tbsp cocoa powder | 3 tbsp unsalted butter |
| 1 tbsp baking powder | 70ml (2½fl oz) cream |
| ¼ tsp salt | 2 tsp vanilla extract |
| 1 large free-range egg, lightly beaten | 35g (1¼oz) icing sugar, more if needed |
| 40g (1½oz) sugar | ¼-½ tsp sea salt, plus crystals to decorate |
| 120ml (4fl oz) milk | |
| 50g (1¾oz) butter, melted | |
| FOR THE GANACHE | |
| 250ml (9fl oz) double cream | |
| 250g (9oz) milk chocolate, chopped | |

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Line 24 mini muffin tin holes with paper cases.
- 2 Sift the flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt into a bowl and set aside.
- 3 Mix together the egg, sugar, milk and butter in a mixing bowl. Sift in the dry ingredients and fold in gently until just combined.
- 4 Spoon into the cases. Bake for 15 minutes, until well risen. Cool in the tins for 10 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 For the icing, heat the sugar and butter in a pan until melted. Stir in the cream and vanilla. Cook gently for 5-7 minutes until caramelised.
- 6 Whisk in the icing sugar until blended and thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Add more sugar if needed. Whisk in the salt. Remove from the heat and leave to cool, but not set. The mixture thickens as it cools. Spoon onto the cakes and leave to set.
- 7 For the ganache, heat the cream until just boiling. Remove from the heat and pour over the chocolate, stirring. Leave until the chocolate melts. Cool at room temperature until thick enough to pipe. Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe onto the cakes. Sprinkle with sea salt crystals.



Molehill cupcakes with strawberry cream

Makes 12

- FOR THE CUPCAKES**
- 3 free-range eggs, separated
90g (3oz) sugar
a pinch of salt
1 tsp vanilla extract
110g (4oz) butter, melted
1 tbsp milk
125g (4½oz) plain flour
50g (1¾oz) cocoa powder
1 tsp baking powder
- FOR THE STRAWBERRY CREAM**
- 250ml (9fl oz) whipping cream
1-2 tbsp icing sugar
200g (7oz) chopped strawberries
- TO DECORATE**
- 150g (5oz) plain chocolate, roughly chopped

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease 12 muffin tin holes.
- 2 Whisk the egg whites with 40g (1½oz) sugar and the salt until stiff and set aside.
- 3 Add the remaining sugar and vanilla to the yolks in a mixing bowl and beat until frothy. Whisk in the butter and milk.
- 4 Sift the flour, cocoa and baking powder into the egg yolk mixture and stir until blended.
- 5 Gradually fold in the egg whites until they are incorporated.
- 6 Spoon into the tins and bake in the oven for about 15 minutes until firm. Cool in the tins for 10 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 7 For the strawberry cream, whisk the cream and icing sugar until thick, but not stiff. Gently stir in the strawberries.
- 8 Scoop out the insides of the cakes, leaving a 'wall' about 1cm (½in) thick. Make the scooped out cake into crumbs.
- 9 Spoon the strawberry cream into the muffin hollows. Sprinkle with the crumbs and chopped chocolate.

Chocolate streusel cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 110g (4oz) butter**
- 75g (2½oz) caster sugar**
- 2 tbsp light brown sugar**
- 2 free-range eggs**
- 150g (5oz) plain flour**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- 25g (1oz) cocoa powder**
- 120ml (4fl oz) milk**

FOR THE STREUSEL

- 75g (2½oz) plain flour**
- 50g (1¾oz) butter**
- 2 tbsp caster sugar**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2** Beat the butter in a mixing bowl until soft and light. Beat in both sugars and beat until light and fluffy.
- 3** Beat in the eggs, one at a time, until well blended. Sift in the flour, baking powder and cocoa and fold in gently until incorporated. Stir in the milk.
- 4** Spoon into the paper cases.
- 5** For the streusel, sift the flour into a bowl. Mix in the sugar and rub in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Sprinkle over the cake mixture.
- 6** Bake for about 20 minutes until risen and golden. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.



Recipe and photography © Stockfood

Hazelnut and poppy seed chocolate cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 2 free-range eggs**
- 125g (4½oz) dark brown sugar**
- 125g (4½oz) unsalted butter, melted**
- 230ml (8fl oz) milk**
- ½ tsp vanilla extract**
- 225g (8oz) plain flour**
- 55g (2oz) cocoa powder, plus extra to decorate**
- ½ tsp baking powder**
- 20g (¾oz) chopped toasted hazelnuts, plus extra to decorate**
- 20g (¾oz) poppy seeds, plus extra to decorate**

FOR THE CREAM

- 150g (5oz) white chocolate**
- 250g (9oz) icing sugar**
- 80g (3oz) unsalted butter**
- 25ml (1fl oz) milk**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2** Whisk the eggs and sugar in a mixing bowl until combined. Whisk in the butter and milk, followed by the vanilla.
- 3** Sift in the flour, cocoa and baking powder and stir until blended. Stir the hazelnuts and poppy seeds into the mixture.
- 4** Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes, until just firm to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5** For the white chocolate cream, melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering (not boiling) water. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly.
- 6** Beat the butter and icing sugar until fluffy and pale, then beat in the milk and melted chocolate until smooth. Cool until firm enough to pipe.
- 7** Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe a swirl on each cake.
- 8** Sprinkle with chopped hazelnuts and poppy seeds. Sift a little cocoa powder over the cake tops.



Recipe © Stockfood, photography © iStock Photo



Ten top tips for working with chocolate

As a World Chocolate Master, Ruth Hinks certainly knows how to make stunning creations from our favourite ingredient and here she shares ten top tips for getting the best from your chocolate baking...



Feature by Ruth Hinks from Cocoa Black www.cocoa.black.com Twitter @Ruth_Hinks

1 CHOCOLATE SHOULD BE ENJOYED AT ROOM TEMPERATURE

Cocoa butter melts at mouth temperature. If chocolate is served cold, it will not melt in the mouth correctly, which impairs flavour and mouth-feel.

2 MELT CHOCOLATE IN A PLASTIC BOWL IN THE MICROWAVE, RATHER THAN IN A BAIN MARIE

Plastic does not retain heat in the way that glass does. By using a plastic bowl, you will minimise the chance of burning the chocolate.

3 CHOCOLATE SHOULD BE STORED IN COOL, DRY CONDITIONS (15-18°C), AWAY FROM STRONG ODOURS

Chocolate is a porous material and is sensitive to light and heat. It readily absorbs odours, which can affect its delicate flavour balance.

4 IF YOU LEARN JUST ONE CHOCOLATE SKILL, MAKE IT TEMPERING

The simplest method is to melt chocolate slowly in the microwave in a plastic bowl. Do not allow it to go above 30°C.

5 AVOID CHEAP CHOCOLATE, QUALITY WILL ALWAYS BEAT QUANTITY

Cheap chocolate tends to have a high proportion of flavourless fat and sugar. Quality chocolate will often have subtle

flavour profiles that can be paired to complement the other ingredients in the recipe.

6 ALWAYS USE THE CHOCOLATE ADVISED IN THE RECIPE

Recipes are usually developed around a chocolate with a certain cocoa percentage and flavour profile. If a different percentage cocoa is used, then the texture and mouth-feel of the dish will be affected. This is particularly important when making mousses.

Quality chocolate will often have subtle flavour profiles that can complement the other ingredients in the recipe

7 NEVER STORE CHOCOLATE IN THE FRIDGE

Moisture ruins chocolate. If chocolate (porous) is stored in the fridge and brought to room temperature, then the resulting condensation will penetrate into it.

8 TEMPERED CHOCOLATE CAN BE USED TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL SHOWPIECES

Watch the video of Ruth creating a 400,000 calorie chocolate Flying Scotsman out of 75kg of chocolate – www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Zvln3Tausg

9 CHOCOLATE CAN BE FLAVOURED WITH ESSENTIAL OILS

Chocolate is a fat-based product and consequently can only be flavoured with fat-based oils.

10 WHEN COLOURING CHOCOLATE, ALWAYS USE A FAT-SOLUBLE FOOD COLOURING

Chocolate is a fat-based product, so, as with the flavouring, it can only be coloured with fat-based food colouring.



EXCLUSIVE RECIPE

Ruth's salted caramel chocolate cupcake

FOR THE CARAMEL GANACHE

300g (10½oz) whipping cream

60g (2oz) liquid glucose

60g (2oz) sugar

450g (1lb) caramel flavour chocolate

60g (2oz) unsalted butter

FOR THE CUPCAKE CASE

300g (10½oz) dark chocolate

paper cupcake cases, thermometer and a paintbrush

FOR THE SALTED CARAMEL

175g (6oz) sugar

75g (2¾oz) cream

1 vanilla bean

75g (2¾oz) glucose

100g (3½oz) unsalted butter

a pinch of salt

FOR THE CHOCOLATE SPONGE

185g (6½oz) unsalted butter

185g (6½oz) dark chocolate

3 large free-range eggs

275g (9¾oz) caster sugar

85g (3oz) plain flour

40g (1½oz) cocoa powder



- 1 First make the caramel ganache. Bring the cream, glucose and sugar to the boil.
- 2 Pour the mixture over the chocolate and butter and blend with a hand blender.
- 3 Allow mixture to set at room temperature until firm, approximately 12 hours.
- 4 To make the chocolate cupcake case, place the chocolate in a plastic bowl and heat in the microwave for 1 minute. Stir and heat again using 10 second bursts until the chocolate reaches 30°C.
- 5 Dip a small square of baking paper into the chocolate and allow to stand for 5 minutes. If tempered, the chocolate will set, be smooth to look at and will peel off the baking paper.
- 6 Using a paintbrush, line your paper cupcake cases with chocolate (two layers) and allow to set in the fridge (10 minutes).
- 7 Remove the paper cupcake cases.
- 8 To make the salted caramel, first split the

vanilla bean in half. Using the back of a knife, scrape out the seeds and place them into the cream. Bring the cream to the boil and set aside until needed. Your cream must be hot when you add it to the sugar caramel.

- 9 To make a dry caramel, heat a pan and add 1 tbsp sugar. When it begins to melt, add another tbsp, ensuring that the sugar does not burn. Repeat for the remainder of the sugar, while stirring with a wooden spoon.
- 10 Add a quarter of the butter to the melted sugar and stir. Be careful, the sugar bubbles.
- 11 Add the glucose to the sugar-butter mixture and then slowly add the hot cream.
- 12 Once the cream has been added, take it off the heat and whisk in the butter and salt.
- 13 Strain your caramel through a sieve, allow to cool and store in a jar. Stored correctly, your caramel will remain in perfect condition for 6 months.
- 14 For the chocolate sponge, preheat the oven

to 160°C/Gas Mark 2½. Melt the butter and chocolate together in the microwave. Allow to cool slightly.

- 15 Place cupcake papers into a cupcake tin.
- 16 Sieve flour and cocoa powder together.
- 17 Whisk together the eggs and sugar until light and fluffy.
- 18 Fold the cooled chocolate mixture into the egg-sugar mixture.
- 19 Fold in the sieved flour and cocoa powder.
- 20 Pour the mixture into the cupcake papers and bake for 10-15 minutes.
- 21 Allow the cupcakes to cool.
- 22 Remove the cupcakes from the paper cases and place them into the chocolate cases.
- 23 Scoop out a small amount of the cupcake and fill it with the salted caramel.
- 24 Pipe ganache in a spiral shape on top of the cupcake to make a base for the next stage of decorations.

The decoration

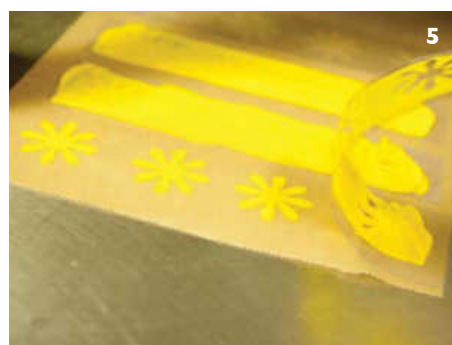
THE CHOCOLATE NEST

- 1 Start with the chocolate nest. Place a marble chopping board or baking tray into the freezer for 30 minutes.
- 2 Temper white chocolate and add fat-soluble green food colouring.
- 3 Using a piping bag, pipe thin strands of coloured chocolate onto the cold surface.
- 4 Using a palette knife or scraper, lift up the chocolate strands and shape them around your hand. This process can be repeated 2-3 times before the marble board will need to be re-frozen.



THE CHOCOLATE FLOWER

- 1 For the chocolate flowers, use a craft punch to punch out some flower shapes into a plastic or card stencil.
- 2 Temper white chocolate and add fat-soluble yellow food colouring.
- 3 Using a piping bag, pipe your coloured chocolate onto the stencil.
- 4 Using a palette knife, spread the chocolate liberally over the stencil.
- 5 Allow to stand for 1 minute before removing the stencil.
- 6 Add a small amount of white chocolate to the centre of each flower and sprinkle with granulated sugar.



Fun & Fancy

CUPCAKES





Recipe © Stockfood, photography © iStock Photo

Butterfly and buttons cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 175g (6oz) butter**
- 200g (7oz) caster sugar**
- 2 large free-range eggs, beaten**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract**
- 225g (8oz) plain flour**
- 2 tsp baking powder**
- 125ml (4½ fl oz) plain yoghurt**
- 150g (5oz) desiccated coconut**

FOR THE TOPPING

- 100g (3½oz) cream cheese**
- 55g (2oz) unsalted butter**
- 250g (9oz) icing sugar**
- 2 tbsp double cream**
- a pinch of salt**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract**

TO DECORATE

- blue and green sugar butterflies**
- blue and green assorted sugarpaste buttons**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2** Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy.
- 3** Beat in the eggs and vanilla.
- 4** Sift in the flour and baking powder and gently fold into the mixture with the yoghurt, until well combined. Stir in the coconut.
- 5** Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-30 minutes until golden and springy. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6** For the topping, beat the cream cheese and butter until light and fluffy. Gradually sift in the icing sugar, beating until smooth.
- 7** Beat in the cream, salt and vanilla. Continue beating until smooth.
- 8** Spoon into a piping bag and pipe onto the cupcakes.
- 9** Decorate with sugar butterflies and sugarpaste buttons.



Recipe and photography © Stockfood

Cherry tiramisu cupcakes

Makes 24

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 75g (2½oz) butter
- 75g (2½oz) caster sugar
- 2 free-range eggs, beaten
- ½ tsp almond extract
- 75g (2½oz) self-raising flour
- 75g (2½oz) canned cherries in juice, drained and chopped, juice reserved

FOR THE CREAM TOPPING

- 300ml (11fl oz) double cream
- 2 tbsp icing sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- cocoa powder

FOR THE SAUCE

- 112ml (4fl oz) juice from canned cherries
- ½ tsp cornflour
- ½ tsp sugar
- ½ tsp lemon juice
- 24 canned pitted cherries, in juice

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 24 mini muffin tin holes.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Gradually add the eggs, a little at a time, and beat well.
- 3 Sift in the flour and gently fold into the mixture. Stir in the almond extract and cherries.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 12-15 minutes until golden and springy to the touch. Place on a wire rack to cool.
- 5 For the cream topping, whisk the cream until soft peaks form. Add the sugar and vanilla and whisk until thick.
- 6 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe a swirl on each cake. Sift cocoa over the top.
- 7 For the sauce, mix a little of the cherry juice with the cornflour to form a paste.
- 8 Heat the remaining cherry juice in a pan and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and whisk in the sugar, cornflour paste and lemon juice. Cook for 1-2 minutes until thickened. Add the cherries and cook for 1 minute. Leave to cool.
- 9 Spoon a cherry and some sauce over the cream.



Baby boy blueberry cupcakes

By Stork (www.bakewithstork.com)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

165g (5¾oz) Stork tub
165g (5¾oz) caster sugar
3 large free-range eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
165g (5¾oz) self-raising flour
2 tbsp whole milk
120g (4¼oz) blueberries
(frozen or fresh)

FOR THE NESTS

70g (2½oz) meringues, broken
130g (4½oz) white chocolate, melted
blue sprinkles
edible gold stars

FOR THE FILLING

90ml (3fl oz) double cream, softly whipped
100g (3½oz) fresh blueberries
3 small sheets of edible gold leaf, cut into 12 pieces (optional)
20g (¾oz) white chocolate, grated

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a muffin tin with 12 dark blue paper cases.
- 2 In a large bowl, beat the Stork, sugar, eggs, vanilla, self-raising flour and milk until evenly combined. Fold through the blueberries.
- 3 Divide the mixture between the cases and bake in the oven for 25 minutes until golden and springy to the touch.
- 4 Transfer to a wire rack and allow to cool completely.
- 5 Crumble the meringues into a bowl, breaking up any large pieces. Add the melted white chocolate and stir well. Top each cupcake with the chocolate meringue mixture to form the nests.
- 6 Softly whip the double cream and add 1 tsp to the centre of each nest. Top with fresh blueberries, sprinkle with the gold stars, blue sprinkles, grated chocolate and top with a small piece of gold leaf.



Surprise inside cupcakes

By Dr Oetker (www.oetker.co.uk)

Makes 6

FOR THE CUPCAKES

65g (2½oz) margarine, softened
65g (2½oz) caster sugar
1 tsp Dr. Oetker Madagascan Vanilla Extract
1 large free-range egg, beaten
75g (3oz) self-raising flour

TO DECORATE

Dr. Oetker Rainbow Popping Candy
Dr. Oetker Vanilla Easy Swirl Cupcake Icing

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Arrange 12 cupcake cases in a muffin tin.
- 2 Put the margarine, sugar, vanilla extract and egg in a bowl. Sift the flour on top and then beat all the ingredients together using an electric whisk until well blended.
- 3 Divide the mixture between the cupcake cases. Smooth the tops and bake in the oven for 20-22 minutes until risen, lightly golden and just firm to the touch. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- 4 To decorate, using a small spoon, scoop out a piece of sponge from the centre of each cake and fill with Rainbow Popping Candy. Replace the scooped out cake on top, trimming if necessary, to snugly fit the top of the cake again.
- 5 Follow the directions on the can of Easy Swirl. Starting in the middle of a cake, pipe the icing round in an anti-clockwise direction to cover the top of the cake, then continue piping round to form a swirl on top.
- 6 Just before serving, sprinkle the cakes with a few more pieces of Rainbow Popping Candy.



Owl cupcakes

By Stork (www.bakewithstork.com)

Makes 6

FOR THE CUPCAKES

24 chocolate cookies with white filling (e.g. Oreos)

165g (5¾oz) Stork tub

125g (4½oz) caster sugar

2 medium free-range eggs

150g (5¼oz) self-raising flour

25g (1oz) cocoa powder

½ tsp vanilla extract

1 tbsp semi-skimmed milk

80g (2¾oz) milk chocolate

40g (1½oz) full fat cream cheese

36 pastel chocolate candy beans, preferably 24 brown and 12 orange or yellow

- 1** For the cupcakes, preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Line a muffin tin with paper cases. Split the chocolate cookies. Put the halves with the white cream aside. Crumble 12 of the other halves.
- 2** Using an electric hand mixer, beat 125g (4½oz) Stork, sugar and vanilla extract until smooth. Carefully mix in the eggs.
- 3** Mix the flour and cocoa powder together and stir into the batter alternately with the milk. Mix in the crumbled cookies. Spoon batter into the muffin tins. Bake the cupcakes in the oven for approximately 20 minutes. Test with a skewer or wooden toothpick, – the cupcakes are done when no liquid mix sticks to the skewer. Allow to cool down.
- 4** Meanwhile, melt 40g (1½oz) Stork and the chocolate in a saucepan over a low heat. Allow to cool slightly. Whisk in the cream cheese. Cool for about 20 minutes until a spreadable consistency. Spread chocolate cream on the cupcakes. Place the white chocolate cookies on the cupcakes as eyes. Use the chocolate candy beans as pupils and noses and use a little chocolate cream to stick on the pupils if required.



Pecan and caramel cupcakes

Makes 24

FOR THE CUPCAKES

75ml (2½fl oz) soured cream
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
a pinch of salt
1 free-range egg
½ tsp vanilla extract
225g (8oz) sugar
110g (4oz) butter, melted
110ml (4fl oz) water
112g (4oz) plain flour

FOR THE TOPPING

120g (4oz) soft butter
a few drops of vanilla extract
60g (2oz) sugar
1 tbsp golden syrup
120g (4oz) cream cheese
150g (5oz) icing sugar
TO DECORATE
24 pecan halves

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 24 mini muffin tin holes.
- 2 Mix together the soured cream, bicarbonate of soda, salt and egg until combined. Add the vanilla and sugar and mix until combined.
- 3 In a small bowl, mix together the melted butter and water. Add to the mixture alternately with the flour, mixing until well combined.
- 4 Spoon the mixture into the paper cases and bake for about 15 minutes until risen and golden. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 For the topping, beat together the butter, vanilla, sugar and syrup until thick and creamy.
- 6 Beat in the cream cheese. Sift in enough icing sugar for the mixture to be a piping consistency.
- 7 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe onto the cupcakes, as in the photo. Place a pecan half on top.



Chai latte cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

30ml (1fl oz) milk
1 chai tea bag
125g (4½oz) unsalted butter
125g (4½oz) caster sugar
2 free-range eggs
125g (4½oz) self-raising flour

FOR THE FROSTING

110g (4oz) sugar
2 large free-range egg whites
175g (6oz) soft unsalted butter
2 tsp vanilla extract
TO DECORATE
ground cinnamon
cinnamon sticks
cardamom pods

- 1 For the cupcakes, gently heat the milk and teabag to a simmer. Cover and leave to infuse for 20 minutes.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 3 Remove the teabag and strain the milk, leaving it to cool to room temperature. Beat together the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time until blended.
- 4 Add the milk and blend well. Stir in the flour until well combined.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 15-20 minutes until golden brown and risen. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the frosting, put the sugar and egg whites in a large heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water and whisk constantly for about 3 minutes, until it feels hot to the touch. Remove from the heat and whisk for about 5 minutes until cool and a thick and shiny meringue.
- 7 Add the butter, 1 tbsp at a time, beating until smooth. Continue beating for 5-10 minutes until thick and very smooth. Add the vanilla and beat until incorporated. Spread or pipe on the cakes.
- 8 Sprinkle with cinnamon and decorate with cinnamon sticks and cardamom pods.



Teapot cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 3 breakfast tea bags
- 120ml (4fl oz) milk
- 140g (5oz) caster sugar
- 120g (4oz) plain flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- a pinch of salt
- 40g (1½oz) butter
- 1 large free-range egg, beaten

TO DECORATE

- 4 tbsp apricot jam
- icing sugar
- 350-400g (12-14oz) white sugarpaste
- 250-300g (9-11oz) red sugarpaste

- 1 For the cupcakes, put the teabags and milk in a pan and heat gently until almost boiling. Cover and leave to cool completely.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 3 Beat together the butter, sugar, flour, baking powder and salt with an electric whisk until crumbly. Add the tea-infused milk and the egg and whisk until smooth and thick.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 18-20 minutes, until risen and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 To decorate, heat the apricot jam gently until melted. Brush lightly over the cakes.
- 6 Roll out half the white sugarpaste on a surface lightly dusted with icing sugar. Cut out 12 discs with a crimped edge cutter the same size as the cakes. Press a disc on each cake. Reserve the trimmings.
- 7 Roll out the red sugarpaste as before and cut out 12 teapot shapes using a card template and 12 tiny discs for the top of the teapots.
- 8 Brush lightly with water and press lightly onto the cakes.
- 9 Mix some icing sugar with a little water to form a paste the consistency of toothpaste. Transfer to a piping bag and use to pipe decorations onto the teapots, including an outline and spots.



Millionaire's cupcakes

By Dr Oetker (www.oetker.co.uk)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

225g (8oz) plain flour

2 tsp Dr. Oetker Baking Powder

115g (4oz) caster sugar

1 large free-range egg, beaten

115g (4oz) butter, melted

150ml (5fl oz) whole milk

1 tsp Dr. Oetker Madagascan Vanilla Extract

140g (5oz) tube of Dr. Oetker Surprise Inside Salted Caramel Cupcake Centre

TO DECORATE

75g (3oz) Dr. Oetker Fine Cook's Chocolate 72% Extra Dark

75g (3oz) Dr. Oetker Fine Cook's Chocolate 35% Milk

175ml (6fl oz) double cream, at room temperature

12 mini shortbread fingers

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Line 12 muffin tin holes with muffin cases. Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl and stir in the sugar. Make a well in the centre.
- 2 In a jug, mix the egg, melted butter, milk and vanilla extract together. Pour into the well and mix all the ingredients together to make a thick batter.
- 3 Divide the mixture evenly between the muffin cases, smooth the tops and bake in the oven for 20-22 minutes until risen and golden.
- 4 Once removed from the oven, leave until the cupcakes are cool enough to handle, and then generously inject each one with salted caramel cupcake centres, making sure the nozzle goes right to the centre of each cupcake, and then transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- 5 To decorate, break the dark and milk chocolates into a heatproof bowl. Put the bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water and leave to melt. Remove the bowl from the water and cool slightly.
- 6 Whilst whisking the chocolate, gradually pour in the cream and continue whisking until thick and glossy. Spoon the chocolate cream generously on top of each cupcake and spread over using a small palette knife. Leave for a few minutes in a cool place to firm up the chocolate before topping with a mini shortbread finger.



Lemon duffin cupcakes

By Dr Oetker (www.oetker.co.uk)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

115g (4oz) lightly salted butter, softened

150g (5oz) caster sugar

1 large free-range egg, beaten

2 tsp Dr. Oetker Natural Lemon Extract

340g (11½oz) plain flour

2 tsp Dr. Oetker Baking Powder (2 sachets)

225ml (8fl oz) whole milk

140g (5oz) pouch of Dr. Oetker Surprise Inside Zingy Lemon Cupcake Centre

TO DECORATE

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

75g (3oz) lightly salted butter, melted

- 1** Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Lightly grease a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2** Put the butter and sugar in a bowl and whisk together until light and creamy. Whisk in the egg and lemon extract.
- 3** Sift the flour and baking powder on top and mix together; gradually adding all the milk, to make a smooth, thick batter.
- 4** Divide the mixture between the muffin tins, smooth the tops and bake in the oven for 30-35 minutes until risen to a dome and firm to the touch.
- 5** As soon as the cupcakes are cool enough to handle, turn them onto a wire rack. Inject each one generously through the side with the lemon cupcake centre.
- 6** To decorate, while the cupcakes are still warm, put the sugar on a plate. Working on one cake at a time, brush all over with melted butter and roll in the sugar to coat. Put back on the wire rack. Your cakes are now ready to serve warm or allow to cool completely.



Dove cage cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

110g (4oz) butter
125g (4½oz) caster sugar
½ tsp vanilla extract
2 free-range eggs
finely grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
175g (6oz) self-raising flour
100ml (3½fl oz) plain yoghurt

TO DECORATE

4 tbsp apricot jam
icing sugar
250g (9oz) light pink sugarpaste

FOR THE DOVES

200g (7oz) white gumpaste

FOR THE BIRDCAGES

300g (11oz) icing sugar
3 tsp cocoa powder
2-3 tbsp boiling water

TO DECORATE

12 sugar flowers

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, lemon zest and vanilla. Sift in the flour and gently fold into the mixture with the yoghurt, until well combined.
- 3 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4 To decorate, heat the apricot jam gently until melted. Brush lightly over the cakes.
- 5 Roll out the light pink sugarpaste on a surface lightly dusted with icing sugar and cut out 12 discs, a little larger than the top of the cakes. Press a disc onto each cake.
- 6 For the doves, press pieces of gumpaste into small silicone dove moulds. Leave to set or freeze briefly until set.
- 7 For the birdcages, using a wooden cocktail stick, prick the design of the birdcages onto the cakes.
- 8 Sift the icing sugar and cocoa into a bowl. Gradually stir in enough water until the mixture is the consistency of thick cream. Beat until smooth and thick enough to coat the back of a spoon.
- 9 Put into a piping bag and pipe the birdcages on the cakes over the guidelines, as in the photo. Attach a sugar flower to the top of the cages and carefully place the dove at the side of the cage, before the icing sets.

Strawberry meringue cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 150g (5oz) plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 large free-range eggs
- 225g (8oz) sugar
- 112ml (4fl oz) sunflower oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 112ml (4fl oz) buttermilk
- 100g (3½oz) strawberries, finely chopped

FOR THE FROSTING

- 275g (10oz) sugar
- 3 large free-range egg whites
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp water

FOR THE GLAZE

- 450g (16oz) plain chocolate, chopped
- 2 tbsp sunflower oil

TO DECORATE

- coloured sugar sprinkles

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 12 muffin tin holes.
- 2 Sift together the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt. Set aside.
- 3 Whisk together the eggs and sugar in a mixing bowl until well combined. Gradually add the oil and vanilla and mix until they are just blended. Slowly add half the flour mixture and mix until just blended. Add the buttermilk and mix until just blended. Slowly add the remaining flour mixture until just blended. Gently stir in the chopped strawberries.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden. Cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to allow to cool completely.
- 5 For the frosting, combine the sugar and egg whites in a heatproof bowl. Use an electric whisk on high speed until foamy. Place the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water. Whisk on high speed for about 10 minutes until stiff peaks form. Remove from the heat, stir in the vanilla and water and beat for 2 minutes until thickened.
- 6 Spoon into a piping bag with a wide, plain nozzle. Pipe cone shapes about 5cm (2in) high on the cakes. Freeze for at least 1 hour.
- 7 For the glaze, combine the chocolate and oil in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water, stirring until melted and smooth. Set aside for 15 minutes to cool slightly.
- 8 Holding each cupcake by its base, dip the cupcake in the chocolate to coat the frosting, allowing the excess to drip off. Spoon more glaze around the edge of the cupcake and any exposed frosting, none of the frosting should show.
- 9 Sprinkle with sugar sprinkles and chill for 30 minutes until set.





Beetroot cupcakes

Makes 10

FOR THE CUPCAKES

175g (6oz) cooked (vacuum packed) beetroot, drained

175g (6oz) caster sugar

175g (6oz) unsalted butter

3 large free-range eggs, separated

175g (6oz) self-raising flour

½ tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE CREAM CHEESE TOPPING

110g (4oz) unsalted butter

300g (11oz) cream cheese

110g (4oz) icing sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 10 muffin tin holes.
- 2 Put the beetroot into a food processor or blender and blend to a purée. Set aside.
- 3 Beat the sugar and butter in a mixing bowl until light and creamy. Add the egg yolks, flour, beetroot and vanilla and beat until smooth.
- 4 Whisk the egg whites until fairly stiff. Beat a large spoonful of egg white into the beetroot mixture until blended, then gradually fold in the remaining egg whites until incorporated.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for about 20 minutes until risen and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the cream cheese frosting, beat the butter until soft, then beat in the cheese until blended. Sift in the icing sugar and beat in the vanilla until smooth.
- 7 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe a generous swirl on each cake.



Matcha and mango cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

225g (8oz) self-raising flour

175g (6oz) caster sugar

35g (1¼oz) desiccated coconut

50ml (1¾fl oz) milk

125g (4½oz) butter, melted

2 free-range eggs, beaten

225ml (8fl oz) mango purée

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

115g (4oz) unsalted butter

300g (11oz) icing sugar

2 tbsp milk

1-2 tsp matcha green tea powder

TO DECORATE

mango slices

toasted desiccated coconut

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Sift the flour into a mixing bowl and stir in the sugar and coconut. Make a well in the centre.
- 3 Add the milk, butter, eggs and mango purée to the well. Stir gently to just combine.
- 4 Spoon the mixture into the paper cases. Bake for 12-15 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 For the buttercream, beat the butter until soft, then gradually sift in the icing sugar, beating well until blended.
- 6 Beat in the milk and matcha green tea powder and beat until light and smooth.
- 7 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe a swirl on each cake.
- 8 Decorate with mango slices and sprinkle with toasted coconut.



Hedgehog cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

2 free-range eggs

125g (4½oz) light brown sugar

125g (4½oz) unsalted butter, melted

230ml (8fl oz) milk

½ tsp vanilla extract

225g (8oz) plain flour

55g (2oz) cocoa powder

½ tsp baking powder

40g (1½oz) chocolate chips

TO DECORATE

50g (1¾oz) white sugarpaste

300g (11oz) milk chocolate, chopped

150g (5oz) blanched almonds, cut into sticks for the spines

24 small chocolate sweets

12 white chocolate buttons

- 1 For the cupcakes, preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Grease a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Whisk the eggs and sugar in a mixing bowl until combined. Whisk in the butter and milk, followed by the vanilla.
- 3 Sift in the flour, cocoa and baking powder and stir until blended. Stir in the chocolate chips.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 15-20 minutes, until just firm to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 To decorate, shape 24 tiny pieces of the sugarpaste into discs for the eyes and set aside.
- 6 Melt the milk chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering (not boiling) water.
- 7 Quickly spread over the cakes and insert the almonds.
- 8 Press in the white discs for the eyes and attach the chocolate sweets with a dab of melted chocolate. Press in a white chocolate button on each cake for the mouth. Leave to set.



Pretty primula cupcakes

By Culpitt (www.culpittcakeclub.com)

FOR THE CUPCAKES

basic vanilla cupcakes (see page 113)

TO DECORATE

Culpitt Cake Decorating Sugarpaste – white
Colour Splash Concentrate Food Colouring – green
buttercream

Cake Star Modelling Paste – white

Colour Splash Edible Pens – red, pink, yellow and green

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

round cutter the same size as the top of your baking cases

Culpitt Flower Plunger 3 set

- 1 Using a palette knife, cut the top off your cupcakes to produce a level surface for decorating.
- 2 Colour the sugarpaste using green food colouring. Roll out to 3mm thickness, then use the round cutter to cut out sugar discs. Spread a thin layer of buttercream across the top of each cupcake. Press a green sugar disc on top of each cake.
- 3 Roll the modelling paste out to a thickness of 2mm. Using the flower cutter, cut out small, medium and large flowers for each cupcake.
- 4 Decorate the flowers using the edible pens.

FOR THE RED AND WHITE FLOWERS

- 1 Using the fine end of the red pen, gently add coloured dots around the outside of each of the petals. Build these up to give continuous colour on the outside edge of the petals.
- 2 Using the fine end of the pink pen, add more widely spaced dots inside these on the outside half of the petals.
- 3 Use the fine end of the green pen to draw a narrow five pointed star in the centre of each flower. Shade around the outside of this with the fine end of the yellow pen.

FOR THE PINK FLOWERS

- 1 Using the large end of the green pen, draw a star in the centre of each flower. Outline the star with the thick end of the yellow pen.
- 2 Using the pink pen's thick end, create a veined effect by drawing lines from the edge of the yellow star to the edge of the petals.

FOR THE YELLOW, ORANGE AND RED FLOWERS

- 1 Use the red pen's thin end to make strokes from the outside of the petal towards the centre and colour the outside edge of the petals.
- 2 Switch to the yellow pen. Starting each stroke with a 2mm overlap with the red, colour from the outside towards the centre of each flower, leaving a small patch of white in the centre.
- 3 With the fine end of the green pen, starting with an overlap on the yellow area, colour in using strokes from the yellow to the centre.



Watermelon cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

145g (5oz) plain flour
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
225g (8oz) sugar
80g (3oz) butter
1 large free-range egg
1 tsp vanilla extract
175ml (6fl oz) buttermilk
50ml (1¾fl oz) melon liqueur
green and red food colourings
50g (1¾oz) chocolate, melted

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2** Sift together the flour, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
- 3** Beat together the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla until smooth.
- 4** Stir in half the flour mixture, followed by the buttermilk and liqueur. Stir in the remaining flour mixture, mixing just until combined.
- 5** Transfer 300g (10oz) of the mixture into a bowl. Add ¼-½ tsp of the red food colouring and stir until completely incorporated.
- 6** Add a little green food colouring to the remaining mixture and stir to incorporate.
- 7** Spoon a little green mixture in each paper case. Add a spoonful of red mixture on top. Dip a cocktail stick or skewer into the melted chocolate and drag through the red mixture a few times.
- 8** Spoon the remaining green mix evenly over the red mixture. Dip a cocktail stick or skewer into the green colouring and drag lightly through the green mixture a few times for the melon skin markings.
- 9** Bake for 18-20 minutes until a skewer inserted into the centre of a cupcake comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely. Cut off the top of the cupcake to reveal the red inside and shape as desired.



Recipe © Stockfood, photography © iStock Photo

Wedding cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

140g (5oz) unsalted butter
280g (10oz) icing sugar
1-2 tbsp single cream
a few drops of vanilla extract

TO DECORATE

450-500g (16-18oz) white sugarpaste
icing sugar
white sugar pearls
100g (3½oz) ivory sugarpaste

FOR THE CUPCAKES

110g (4oz) butter
110g (4oz) caster sugar
2 free-range eggs, beaten
110g (4oz) self-raising flour
a few drops of orange flower water

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 12 muffin or cupcake tin holes.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar until light and creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs until well blended.
- 3 Sift in the flour and fold in gently until just combined. Stir in the orange flower water. Transfer to the cases and bake for 20-25 minutes. Leave to cool.
- 4 For the buttercream, beat the butter until soft. Gradually sift in the icing sugar and beat until smooth. Add 1 tbsp cream and beat until creamy and smooth. Beat in the remaining cream if necessary, to loosen the mixture. Beat in the vanilla.
- 5 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe on each cake to cover the top.
- 6 Roll out the white sugarpaste thinly on a surface dusted with icing sugar. Cut out 6 small rounds, slightly smaller than the diameter of the cakes and 6 slightly larger. Cut out 6 small flat strips for the collars. Reserve the trimmings.
- 7 Drape the larger rounds on 6 of the cakes. Flute the edges slightly.
- 8 Mould 6 small thick squares of white sugarpaste and cut a V shape out of the top of each. Attach to the cakes with a dab of water.
- 9 Decorate with sugar pearls, attaching with a dab of buttercream. Arrange sugar pearls around the base, attaching with a dab of buttercream. Leave to dry.
- 10 Place the smaller sugarpaste rounds on the remaining cakes. Brush the collar strips with a little water and arrange on the cakes, curving them into collar shapes. Attach a sugar pearl to each side of the collars, with a dab of buttercream.
- 11 Shape 6 small thick squares from the white sugarpaste trimmings and attach to the cakes with a dab of water, for the shirt pockets.
- 12 Roll out the ivory sugarpaste on a surface dusted with icing sugar. Cut out 6 small strips. Cut off the ends of each strip diagonally, to form the ties. Attach to the cakes with a dab of water.
- 13 Roll 6 tiny balls of ivory sugarpaste and attach to the top of the ties with a dab of water.
- 14 Shape 3 small thick squares of ivory sugarpaste and cut in half diagonally, to make 6 triangles. Attach to the top of the shirt pockets with a dab of water for the handkerchiefs. Leave to dry.



Recipe and photography © Stockfood

Raspberry butterfly cupcakes

Makes 12

250g (9oz) raspberries

1 tbsp lemon juice

175g (6oz) sugar

450ml (16fl oz) double cream

TO DECORATE

175g (6oz) pink candy melts

70g (2½oz) dark pink sugarpaste

1 tube of white piping icing

yellow sugar pearls
icing sugar

FOR THE CUPCAKES

2 free-range eggs

110g (4oz) self-raising flour

½ tsp baking powder

110g (4oz) butter, softened

110g (4oz) caster sugar

a few drops of vanilla extract

FOR THE MOUSSE

2 tbsp powdered gelatine

110ml (4fl oz) cold water

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2 Put all the ingredients for the cakes into a mixing bowl and whisk with an electric whisk until well combined. Alternatively, beat well with a wooden spoon.
- 3 Spoon the mixture into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and springy to the touch. Cool on a wire rack.
- 4 Carefully cut round the tops of the cakes with a cutter or sharp knife and remove the cake tops. Cut the tops in half to form two wings.
- 5 For the raspberry mousse, combine the raspberries, lemon juice and sugar in a pan over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Cook until the raspberries give out their juice. Mash the raspberries and bring to a boil. Press through a sieve to remove the seeds.
- 6 Whisk the cream until starting to thicken, then whisk until stiff peaks form. Chill.
- 7 Sprinkle the gelatine over the water in a small bowl. Leave to stand for 5 minutes until the gelatine has absorbed the water and become translucent. Stir the gelatine into the raspberry purée in a pan. Heat, stirring constantly, until melted and combined. Do not boil. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool for a few minutes.
- 8 Fold in half the cream until smooth, then fold in the remaining cream until combined. Chill for about 1 hour until firm but not set.
- 9 Spoon some mousse into the cake centres. Pipe or spoon a strip of mousse along the centre of the cakes for the butterfly body. Chill.
- 10 Melt the candy melts in a heatproof bowl over simmering water. Remove from the heat and stir gently. Put into a small piping bag and pipe 24 curved lines on non-stick baking paper for the antennae. Leave to set.
- 11 Mould 12 pieces of the sugarpaste into cylinders for the heads. Place at the top of the line of mousse on the cakes.
- 12 Carefully peel the antennae from the paper and attach to the heads with a dab of piping icing.
- 13 Pipe two dots of piping icing on each head and attach a sugar pearl to each dot. Chill until set.
- 14 Replace the wings on the bodies, then sift icing sugar over the top.



Photographer Fulvio Maiani, stylist Michael Dye

Cupcake diaries of a *Conturier*

Debbie Wingham uses her fashion inspiration to create a Grecian ombré cupcake tower.

Fashion crosses over into everything these days – it becomes the inspiration for home decor, art and architecture and, of course, translates really beautifully to cake artistry.

I often like to look at a beautiful dress in a fashion magazine and interpret the key features to make the artistic edible version in larger form, often capturing the essence of draping fabric, embellishments and so on. For this issue I thought why not make mini cupcake versions?

Arguably it's less of a cupcake and more like a tower of cupcakes, although they can only be skinny cupcakes or they will end up leaning and lumpy, which is not very high fashion! Alternatively, you could use mini

Victoria sponge cake tins, which are just like cupcake tins really, but you don't use cupcake cases and you get a good straight finish on the sides, which will assist with perfectly neat stackable puds!

I'm starting to feel all spring-like now and longing for summer, which you can probably sense with my chosen dress. I looked through some of my fashion bible archives and found this simple Grecian number (above) with beautiful chain work. I thought its fusion of elegant pastel shades would translate well into an airbrushed ombré colour scheme with some sugar chain work. So many cakes these days seem to lean towards vintage inspiration,

so I thought I would break the mould and do a more bold ombré colour palette, but you can do whatever shades you wish. Monochrome with silver chains would be fantastic and trans-seasonal too. I also wanted to capture the heart shaped neckline in my design. So here is how I did it...

Grecian ombré cupcakes

FOR THE CUPCAKES

chocolate cupcakes – three per dress
one portion of chocolate ganache

TOOLS USED

airbrush with emerald, pink and
purple airbrush colours

white fondant
white petal paste

lilac petal paste

rolling pin

fine paintbrush

large chain mould

fine sequin mould

medium blossom cutter with
blossom embosser

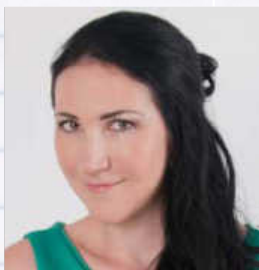
FOR THE SUGAR WORK

Mapa isomalt gloves

silicone mat

Mapa sugar pourer

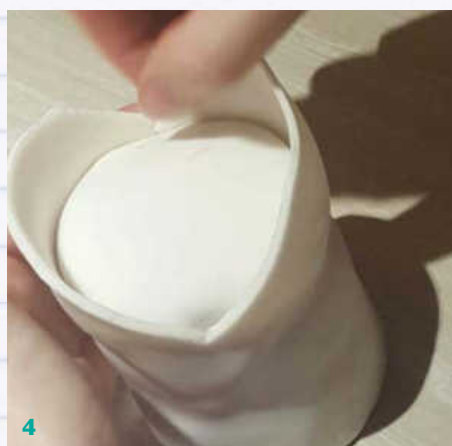
- 1 The layers of cupcakes or mini Victoria sponges need to be very equal to avoid leaning towers. Three tiers should do it, any more than that is likely to need a support of some sort. Fix them all together with a generous layer of ganache.
- 2 The three-tier layered cupcakes need to be crumb coated all over in chocolate ganache and left to set.
- 3 To decorate, mix together some fondant and petal paste. You want a ratio of roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ petal paste to $\frac{3}{4}$ fondant to make sure the shape of the dress sits above the cake neatly and retains its shape. Make sure you knead the petal paste and fondant together well, as petal paste alone can taste quite unpleasant. Roll out the paste and cut a shaped piece of fondant that will cover the top of the cupcake stack and go down into a V on the front. Attach to the crumb coat.
- 4 From the rolled paste, cut out a large love heart shaped dress with a flat rather than pointed bottom (the heart shape only really applies to the top of the piece of paste). Place the V of the love heart over the fondant V, then wrap the rest of the heart around the cake, so the ends meet at the back. The upper section of the dress will sit higher than the cake, like a collar for a slightly more unusual technique.
- 5 In the centre back I stuck to the fashion design brief and did a haute couturier special with covered buttons and loops – it's so chic and takes moments to create. The loops are made from thin strips of petal paste and looped, then adhered with a tiny dab of water. The button again is a small piece of petal paste rolled into mini button sizes. (Be sure to roll these equally or it can ruin the whole look. Use a ruler and work in mm to get an accurate size).
- 6 Now it's time to colour your design with an airbrush. My design uses two shades – emerald and a mixture of purple and pink. Be sure to airbrush from a distance and gently, or you may get an uneven finish and the overall effect becomes patchy. If you don't already have an airbrush kit and do a lot of cake decorating, I can highly recommend treating yourself to a Dinky Doodle. You can buy them from The Cake Decorating Company (www.thecakedecoratingcompany.co.uk). If not, you could use the ombré dip and sponge technique, which is basically using a small sponge and lustre paint to dab the colours on. This gives you quite an authentic finish, particularly for pastel or metallic shades, but won't be as good for bold colours.
- 7 To make the chain and the fine sequin border I used two fabulous moulds I found on Etsy, but equally you could use a border mould instead if you wanted. I wanted sugar jewel embellishments so decided to use gold isomalt. You do need some kit for isomalt (it's not just a matter of buying isomalt and cracking on with the project), you'll need a suitable surface – a silicone mat works well over a granite or metal worktop (not glass). You'll also need gloves and a silicone pouring pot for melting the sugar in the microwave. These things you can re-use again forever, so they are a good investment and not particularly expensive.
- 8 I always use my Mapa sugar art gloves and I also use isomalt. I find that CakePlay isomalt nibs are the best brand for pouring moulds and they come in all sorts of colours.
- 9 To make the sugar chain in this way, I placed the mould on a silicone mat, melted the isomalt in an isomalt safe pot in the microwave for a few minutes (this can differ dependent on microwave power), and then



© Adel Hanna

Debbie Wingham is an internationally renowned haute couturier and a celebrity gown designer, and also designs cakes under the company name Couture To Cakes. She has been described as the new Nigella of cake artistry and has made cakes for the *Downton Abbey* cast and Amanda Holden to name a couple. To find out more about Debbie and her beautiful cakes, visit www.couturetocakes.com and www.debbiewingham.co.uk





poured it into the chain mould. Isomalt is very hot and it dries incredibly quickly, so you need to work fast and not take on any other multi-tasking at this point. It needs your full attention.

10 Once the sugar had cooled enough to be curved without dripping, I wrapped it around the cake where I wanted it and held it until it was secure and almost cooled. I did this with the border at the top and the chain around the base.

11 If you don't want to use isomalt, go for a simpler method of petal paste in a chain mould and then paint it gold. It still looks good – I just find the sugar option looks a bit more realistic. It can be tricky to work with and takes practice, particularly when creating something like a chain that needs to be accurate, but practice makes perfect. With the right isomalt you can re-melt and re-pour to get the desired finish. If you're more of a beginner, go for the petal paste option.

12 To finish, I simply painted the small section behind the love heart neckline gold to accentuate the chain sugar work. I added a petal paste blossom flower in a soft pastel shade to soften the bold colours and balance out the sugar work.

Fruit & Nut

CUPCAKES

50



Mixed nut crumble cupcakes

Makes 18

FOR THE CUPCAKES

225g (8oz) light brown sugar

75g (2½oz) plain flour

125g (4½oz) chopped nuts – pecans, almonds, walnuts

150g (5oz) butter, melted

2 free-range eggs

FOR THE CRUMBLE

120g (4oz) plain flour

60g (2oz) caster sugar

60g (2oz) unsalted butter, diced

- 1 For the cupcakes, preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 18 mini muffin tin holes. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper.
- 2 Stir together the sugar, flour and nuts in a mixing bowl.
- 3 Beat together the butter and eggs until smooth. Stir into the dry ingredients just until combined.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 15-20 minutes, until golden and risen. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 For the crumble, put all the ingredients into a mixing bowl and rub with your fingers to a coarse crumble.
- 6 Sprinkle the mixture evenly over the baking tray and bake for 15 minutes, until lightly coloured. Cool on the tray.
- 7 Sprinkle the crumble over the cakes.

Apple cupcakes

Makes 8

FOR THE CUPCAKES

125g (4½oz) butter

125g (4½oz) caster sugar

2 large free-range eggs

125g (4½oz) plain flour

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and diced

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

110g (4oz) unsalted butter

225g (8oz) icing sugar

1 tsp ground cinnamon

FOR THE CARAMEL GLAZE

250g (9oz) caster sugar

4 tbsp water

150ml (5fl oz) whipping cream

50g (1¾oz) butter

a pinch of salt

- 1 For the cupcakes, preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 8 large muffin tin holes.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy.
- 3 Add the eggs, one at a time, beating thoroughly after each addition.
- 4 Fold in the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and cinnamon until just combined. Gently stir in the apples.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for about 25 minutes until risen and golden. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the buttercream, beat the butter until soft. Sift in the icing sugar and cinnamon and beat until light and fluffy.
- 7 Spoon on top of the cupcakes.
- 8 For the caramel glaze, put the sugar into a heavy-based frying pan and stir in the water. Heat gently, tilting the pan, (do not stir) until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat and bubble for 4-5 minutes until golden brown. Remove from the heat and carefully stir in the cream and butter. Stir in the salt to taste. Pour into a bowl and leave to cool and thicken.
- 9 Drizzle the glaze over the buttercream.



Blackberry cupcakes

Makes 10

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tbsp light brown sugar
- 2 tbsp golden syrup
- 25g (1oz) almonds, finely chopped

TO DECORATE

- 70g (2½oz) blackberries, plus 10 to decorate
- 110g (4oz) unsalted butter
- 200g (7oz) icing sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line 3-4 large baking trays with non-stick baking paper. Grease an inverted muffin tin.
- 2 Stir together the flour, butter, sugar and syrup until blended. Mix in the almonds.
- 3 Spoon two level tablespoonfuls of the mixture at a time onto a baking tray, spacing them 15cm (6in) apart. Using moistened fingertips, press each to a 5cm (2in) round.
- 4 Bake for 7 minutes until deep golden. Cool for about 30 seconds – so they are pliable, but set enough to move without tearing.
- 5 Quickly drape over the inverted muffin tins, gently pressing to a cup shape; cool. Remove from the tins. Repeat with the remaining mixture, making two at a time.
- 6 For the buttercream, purée the blackberries in a food processor. Press the pulp through a sieve into a bowl to remove the seeds.
- 7 Beat the butter until soft. Sift in the icing sugar and beat well until smooth.
- 8 Add the vanilla and the blackberry purée and beat until smooth. Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe a swirl in each cake. Place a blackberry on top.



Quick blueberry cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 200g (7oz) blueberries
- 250g (9oz) plain flour
- 120g (4oz) butter
- 175g (6oz) sugar
- 1 free-range egg
- 2½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- a pinch of salt
- 300ml (11 fl oz) plain yoghurt

FOR THE TOPPING

- 300g (11 oz) icing sugar
- 80g (3oz) soft unsalted butter
- 110ml (4 fl oz) soured cream, more if needed
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

TO DECORATE

- blueberries
- icing sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Toss the blueberries in 2 tbsp of the flour. Set aside.
- 3 Beat the butter and sugar together in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy, then beat in the egg.
- 4 Sift in the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt and stir until just combined.
- 5 Gently stir in the yoghurt and blueberries.
- 6 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for about 20 minutes until the cupcakes are golden and springy to the touch. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 7 For the topping, sift the icing sugar into a bowl and beat in the butter until they are well combined.
- 8 Beat in the soured cream and vanilla until smooth. If it is too thick, add more of the soured cream.
- 9 Spoon on top of the cakes and decorate with blueberries. Sift some icing sugar over the top.



Elderberry cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

150g (5oz) soft butter
150g (5oz) icing sugar
3 free-range eggs
a few drops of vanilla extract

80g (3oz) self-raising flour
55g (2oz) ground almonds
25g (1oz) cornflour
100g (3½oz) elderberries

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

200g (7oz) cream cheese
100g (3½oz) unsalted butter
500g (18oz) icing sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 tbsp elderberry jam

TO DECORATE
baked elderberry sprigs

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2 Beat the butter with the sugar, eggs and vanilla in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Stir in the self-raising flour, ground almonds and cornflour until they're blended, then stir in the elderberries.
- 3 Spoon the mixture into the paper cases and bake for about 15 minutes. Test to see if they are done by inserting a cocktail stick, it should come out clean. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to allow to cool completely.
- 4 For the buttercream, put the cream cheese, butter and icing sugar in a mixing bowl. Slowly mix together, using an electric whisk until light and smooth. Beat in the vanilla. Stir in the jam until just combined.
- 5 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe a generous swirl onto each cake. Decorate with elderberries.

TIP Do not eat raw elderberries. They must be cooked to be edible.

Lemon cupcakes

Makes 10

FOR THE CUPCAKES

80g (3oz) butter, melted
1 free-range egg
175ml (6fl oz) plain yoghurt
juice and finely grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
250g (9oz) plain flour
1 tbsp baking powder
150g (5oz) sugar

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

110g (4oz) unsalted butter
250g (9oz) icing sugar
100g (3½oz) lemon curd
1 tsp lemon juice

TO DECORATE

candied lemon peel strips

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 10 muffin tin holes.
- 2 Combine the butter, egg, yoghurt, lemon juice and zest in a mixing bowl. Sift in the flour, baking powder and sugar. Stir until only just combined.
- 3 Spoon the mixture into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and risen. Cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4 For the buttercream, beat the butter until soft. Sift in the icing sugar and beat well until smooth and creamy.
- 5 Beat the lemon curd with the lemon juice until well blended. Beat into the buttercream until smooth.
- 6 Spoon the buttercream into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe on top of the cakes. Decorate with candied lemon peel.



Butterfly cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

150g (5oz) butter

150g (5oz) sugar

3 free-range eggs

100ml (3½fl oz) double cream

150g (5oz) self-raising flour

55g (2oz) ground almonds

a pinch of salt

1 large peach, peeled, pitted, diced and tossed in 1 tsp flour

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

110g (4oz) unsalted butter

250g (9oz) icing sugar

3-4 tbsp peach purée

1 tbsp double cream

orange food colouring (optional)

TO DECORATE

12 sugar butterflies

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole bun tin.
- 2 Beat the sugar and butter in a bowl until creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs and cream. Sift in the flour and stir into the mix with the ground almonds and salt until just combined. Gently stir in the diced peaches.
- 3 Spoon into the cases and bake for about 25 minutes until risen and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes and then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4 For the buttercream, beat the butter until soft and creamy. Sift in the sugar and beat until smooth. Beat in the purée a little at a time with the cream and the colouring, if using. Chill if necessary, to firm up.
- 5 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe in a circular motion on the cakes to form rose shapes. Decorate with sugar butterflies.



Plum and nut cupcakes

Makes 20

FOR THE CUPCAKES

60g (2oz) plain flour

60g (2oz) wholemeal flour

½ tsp baking powder

¼ tsp salt

1 large free-range egg

40g (1½oz) caster sugar

110ml (4fl oz) milk

50g (1¾oz) butter, melted

½ tsp vanilla extract

110g (4oz) plums, finely chopped

25g (1oz) toasted nuts – almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc, finely chopped

½ tsp ground cinnamon

FOR THE FROSTING

50g (1¾oz) unsalted butter

112ml (4fl oz) soured cream

450g (16oz) icing sugar

½ tsp milk

2 tsp ground cinnamon

TO DECORATE

toasted chopped nuts

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Place cases in 20 mini muffin tin holes.
- 2 Sift together the flours, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. Set aside.
- 3 Mix together the egg, sugar, milk, melted butter and vanilla in a mixing bowl.
- 4 Sift the dry ingredients onto the egg mixture, tipping in the bits of bran that are left in the sieve. Quickly stir the mix until only just combined.
- 5 Fold in the plums, nuts and cinnamon.
- 6 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 10-15 minutes until golden brown. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 7 For the frosting, beat the butter until soft, then beat in the soured cream.
- 8 Gradually sift in the icing sugar and beat until smooth. Beat in the milk.
- 9 Stir in the cinnamon, leaving the mixture with streaks.
- 10 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe on top of the cakes.
- 11 Sprinkle with nuts and decorate with plum slices to finish.



The recipes on page 68 and the red cabbage and apple cupcakes on page 69 are taken from *Baking With Vegetables* by Parragon Books, RRP £8. Part of Parragon's range of Love Food cookbooks, visit www.parragon.com/lovefood for more.

Chocolate, pepper and potato cupcakes

By Love Food

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

175g (6oz) spelt flour	125ml (4fl oz) greek-style yoghurt
3 tbsp cocoa powder	2 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp baking powder	50g (1½oz) plain chocolate, chopped into small pieces
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda	1 tbsp golden granulated sugar mixed with ¼ tsp coarsely ground black peppercorns
½ tsp pepper	
¼ tsp salt	
75g (2½oz) golden caster sugar	
100g (3½oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature	
2 free-range eggs	
200g (7oz) cold unseasoned mashed potato	

Sweet potato and coconut cupcakes

By Love Food

Makes 16-18

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 2 sweet potatoes**
- 175g (6oz) spelt flour**
- 2 tsp baking powder**
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda**
- ½ tsp ground ginger**
- ¼ tsp salt**
- 150g (5½oz) golden caster sugar**
- 115g (4oz) solid coconut oil**
- 2 large free-range eggs**

FOR THE FROSTING

- 225g (8oz) unsalted butter at room temperature, diced**
- 325g (11½oz) icing sugar, sifted**
- 2 x 50g (1½oz) sachets of creamed coconut, melted**
- ½ tsp vanilla extract**
- ⅛ tsp salt**
- ½ tbsp finely grated lime zest**
- 1 tbsp lime juice**
- toasted coconut flakes and slivers of lime rind, to decorate (optional)**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 220°C/Gas Mark 7. Place the sweet potatoes on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 45 minutes. Peel when cool enough to handle and purée in a food processor until smooth. Set aside.
- 2** Reduce the oven temperature to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line two 9-hole muffin tins with paper cases.
- 3** Sift the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, ginger and salt twice into a bowl.
- 4** Put the sugar and oil into a separate bowl and beat with a hand-held electric mixer for 3 minutes until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, alternating with the flour mixture, beating well after each addition. Stir in the sweet potato purée.
- 5** Spoon the mixture into the paper cases, filling them about two-thirds full. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes, turning the tins halfway through cooking, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6** For the frosting, put the butter and icing sugar into a bowl and beat for 1 minute or until fluffy. Beat in the remaining ingredients.
- 7** Swirl on the frosting. Decorate with toasted coconut flakes and slivers of lime, if using.



Red cabbage and apple cupcakes

By Love Food

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

85g (3oz) hazelnuts

1 tbsp butter, melted

150g (5½oz) plain flour

150g (5½oz) wholemeal flour

4 tbsp cocoa powder

2 tsp baking powder

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg

**125g (4½oz) golden
caster sugar**

1 tsp lemon juice

**125g (4½oz) red cabbage,
very finely grated,
then chopped**

**70g (2½oz) crisp eating
apple, coarsely grated**

**2 tsp finely grated
orange zest**

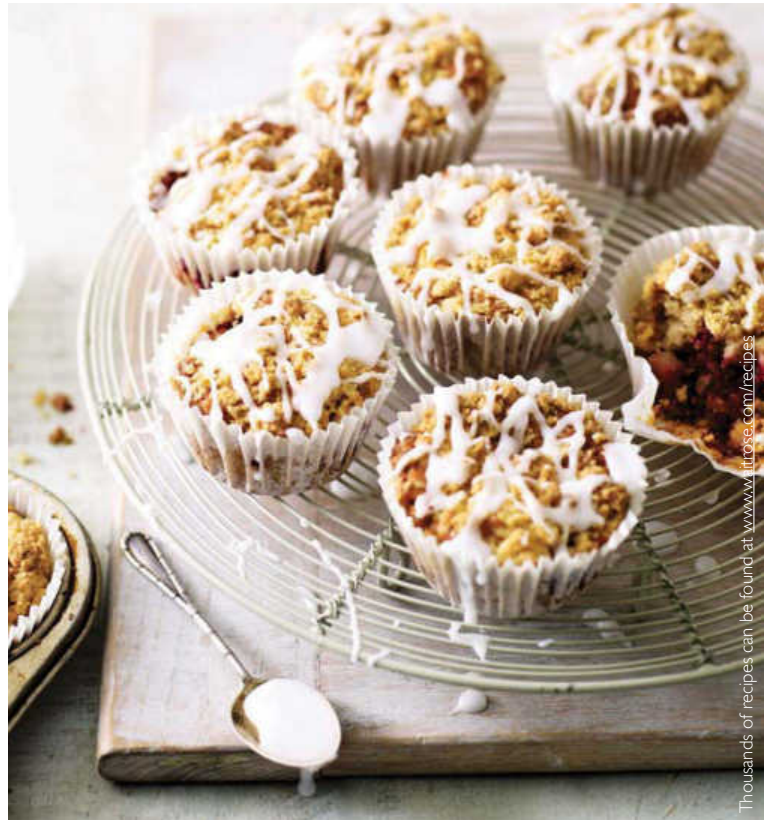
2 free-range eggs

225ml (8fl oz) buttermilk

4 tbsp hazelnut oil

2 tsp vanilla extract

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Put the hazelnuts on a baking tray and toast in the oven for 10 minutes. Rub off the skins using a clean tea towel. Roughly chop, toss with the butter and set aside.
- 2 Increase the oven temperature to 220°C/Gas Mark 7. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with tulip paper cases.
- 3 Sift together the flours, cocoa powder, baking powder, soda, salt and nutmeg into a large bowl, tipping in any bran remaining in the sieve. Stir in the sugar.
- 4 Stir the lemon juice into the cabbage. Mix the cabbage, apple and orange zest into the flour mix, breaking up clumps with your fingertips. Stir in the hazelnuts, mixing well.
- 5 Beat together the eggs, buttermilk, oil and vanilla extract. Pour into the flour mixture, then stir until just combined. Do not over-mix. Spoon about 4 tbsp of the mixture into each paper case.
- 6 Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until a cocktail stick inserted into the centre of a cupcake comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.



Thousands of recipes can be found at www.waitrose.com/recipes

Apple and blackberry crumble cupcakes

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com/recipes)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

145g (5oz) butter, cubed

270g (9½oz) self-raising flour

125g (4½oz) golden caster sugar

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

**1 Braeburn apple, peeled and chopped
into small chunks**

170g (6oz) blackberries

**½ tsp Waitrose Signature Spice,
ground**

**1 medium essential Waitrose Free
Range Egg, beaten**

150g (5½oz) pot of natural yoghurt

**100g (3½oz) Tate & Lyle Fondant
Icing Sugar**

- 1 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.
- 2 To make the crumb topping, rub together 70g (2½oz) of the butter, 100g (3½oz) of the flour and 25g (1oz) of the sugar in a medium bowl, until resembling large, coarse breadcrumbs. Melt the remaining butter in a small pan and allow to cool.
- 3 In a large mixing bowl, combine the remaining flour and sugar with the bicarbonate of soda. Stir in the chopped apple, blackberries and spice. Add the melted butter along with the beaten egg and yoghurt, stirring until just combined.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases, then distribute the crumb topping evenly over each cupcake. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden, then place on a rack until completely cooled.
- 5 To make the fondant drizzle, combine the icing sugar with 2-3 tsp water and mix until smooth and glossy. Use the end of a spoon to drizzle the fondant over the top of each of the cupcakes.

TIP Try adding the seeds of a vanilla pod to the fondant drizzle for a tasty, pretty twist.



Blueberry and coconut yoghurt cupcakes

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 12

TO DECORATE

2 tubs of Lakeland Vanilla Flavoured Frosting

Wilton Colour Right 8 Pack

FOR YOUR OWN BUTTERCREAM

225g (8oz) unsalted butter, softened

400g (14oz) icing sugar, sifted

½ lemon, juice only

FOR THE CUPCAKES

175g (6oz) caster sugar

175g (6oz) unsalted butter, softened

½ tsp Star Kay White Gold Star Vanilla

3 free-range eggs

175g (6oz) self-raising flour

½ tsp baking powder

FOR THE FILLING

75g (2¾oz) blueberry conserve, sieved

100g (3½oz) thick coconut milk yoghurt

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and line a Lakeland 12-Hole Deep Bun Tin with cupcake cases.

2 In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla, then the eggs one at a time, beating well after each. Sift in the flour and baking powder, folding into the mixture using a metal spoon.

3 Divide the mixture equally between the cupcake cases. Bake for 20-25 minutes until the cakes are golden, well risen and spring back to the touch. Leave to cool for 10 minutes in the tin, then remove and allow to cool completely on the rack.

4 Mix the yoghurt and blueberry conserve together in a small bowl.

5 If making your own buttercream, mix the ingredients well together. Add 100g (3½oz) buttercream or vanilla frosting to five separate bowls. Referring to the Lakeland Colour Formula Chart, colour the first bowl of frosting pastel yellow. Mix the colours together in a small bowl or cup and add to the frosting with a cocktail stick, just a little at a time until you reach the desired shade. Repeat for the remaining bowls of frosting, colouring them pastel pink, pastel green, pastel purple and winter green/blue.

6 Using a Lakeland Cupcake Corer; remove the centre of each cooled cake and fill with 1 tsp of the yoghurt mixture.

7 Snip the end off a piping bag and fit with a flower nozzle. Fill the piping bag with pastel yellow frosting and pipe a swirl on the cakes. Repeat with the remaining coloured frostings, using a new piping bag each time.

Easter lemon cupcakes

By Flora (www.flora.com)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

115g (4oz) Flora Buttery

115g (4oz) caster sugar

2 medium free-range eggs

115g (4oz) self-raising flour

2 tbsp lemon curd

FOR THE ICING

55g (2oz) Flora Buttery

225g (8oz) icing sugar, sieved

1 tbsp lemon curd

1 tsp milk

25g (1oz) desiccated coconut

yellow food colouring

chocolate drops and orange jelly sweets, to decorate

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.

2 Place all the cupcake ingredients in a mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon for 2-3 minutes until well mixed. Place dessert spoons of the mixture in the paper cases.

3 Bake for around 20 minutes until soft and springy to touch. Cool on a wire rack.

4 Mix the Flora, icing sugar and lemon curd together; add a little yellow colouring and spread or pipe over the cakes. Mix a little yellow colouring to the coconut and sprinkle over the top. Use chocolate drops as eyes and orange sweets for the nose.



Paddington Bear marmalade cakes

By Yeo Valley (www.yeovalley.co.uk)

Makes 8-10

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 75g (2¾oz) Yeo Valley Butter**
- 50g (1¾oz) caster sugar**
- 2 free-range eggs**
- 150g (5¼oz) pure fruit, no added sugar orange marmalade**
- 200g (7oz) wholemeal self-raising flour**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- 25g (1oz) ground almonds**
- grated zest of 2 oranges**
- 125g (4½oz) Yeo Valley Natural Yeogurt**

FOR THE OPTIONAL GLAZE

- 60g (2oz) pure fruit, no added sugar orange marmalade**
- 2 tbsp orange juice**

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease 8-10 small cake tins or holes of a muffin tin.
- 2 Place the butter and sugar in a bowl and beat until smooth and creamy. Beat the eggs and add to the mixture with the marmalade – mix thoroughly to combine. Stir together the flour, baking powder and ground almonds and add to the mixture with the orange zest, then gently stir in the Yeogurt.
- 3 Spoon the mixture into the tin and bake for 25-30 minutes until golden brown.
- 4 Warm the marmalade and orange juice for the glaze in a small pan until runny. Sieve to remove the rind, then spoon or drizzle over the warm cakes. Serve warm with crème fraîche or leave to cool on a wire rack.



Maple and pecan cupcakes

By Yeo Valley (www.yeovalley.co.uk)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 150g (5¼oz) plain white flour**
- 150g (5¼oz) wholemeal flour**
- 3 tsp baking powder**
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda**
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon**
- 50g (1¾oz) soft brown sugar**
- 30g (1oz) chopped pecan nuts**
- 1 eating apple, peeled and chopped**
- 2 free-range eggs, beaten**
- 1 tbsp maple syrup**
- 100g (3½oz) Yeo Valley Unsalted Butter, melted**
- a pinch of salt**
- 1 tbsp honey**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract**
- 200g (7oz) Yeo Valley 0% Fat Natural Yeogurt or 0% Fat Vanilla Yeogurt**

FOR THE NUT TOPPING

- 60g (2oz) pecans, chopped**
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon**
- 2 tbsp maple syrup**

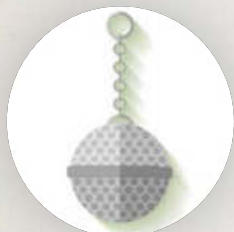
- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases. Sieve the dry ingredients into a bowl and add the diced apple.
- 2 Beat together the eggs, maple syrup, melted butter, honey, vanilla and Yeogurt. Pour this liquid into the dry ingredients and mix until moist, but still lumpy.
- 3 Spoon the batter into the paper cases.
- 4 Mix together the topping ingredients until combined, then sprinkle over the top of the cupcakes.
- 5 Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes until firm, risen and golden.
- 6 Leave to cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then turn out to allow to cool completely on a cooling rack.



The extract on pages 72-76 is taken from *The Book Of Tea: Growing it, making it, drinking it, the history, recipes and lots more* by Louise Cheadle and Nick Kilby, published by Jacqui Small, RRP £20.

The perfect afternoon tea

There is no better marriage than tea and cake, so Louise Cheadle and Nick Kilby show us how to make the perfect cup, then include it in our recipes...



1 ONLY EVER USE FRESHLY DRAWN WATER

It might be a while since you've drawn any water from a well, if ever, but when we say 'freshly drawn water' what we mean is water straight from the tap. Leaving water in the kettle and boiling it over and over again will make the tea taste 'flat'. Why fresh each time? Well, then you get a good shot of oxygen in the water and that makes the tea taste oh-so good.



2 HEAT THE WATER TO THE CORRECT TEMPERATURE

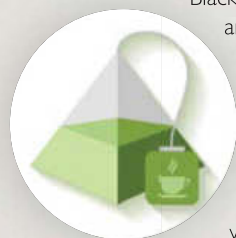
Too hot? Too cold? Aah, just right! If Goldilocks liked tasting tea, she'd surely have something to say about the temperature of the water you use to brew tea. We do too, and it depends on what tea you're drinking.

Black tea and herbal infusions need boiling water and that means 100°C (212°F).

Green tea, white tea and oolong don't like boiling water, as it will scorch the leaves and take away from their delicate flavour.

Technically, you are supposed to use water at 80°C (176°F), but seeing as few of us have a thermometer to hand when making a cuppa just click your kettle off before it boils or let it cool a

little once it has boiled.



3 ONLY EVER USE QUALITY TEA

This is a biggie. A nice cuppa comes from brewing nice tea leaves. Don't scrimp when it comes to the quality of the tea. Your taste buds will thank you for it.

4 USE JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF WATER

In technical terms, this is the 'tea to water ratio' – it's easy to go wrong on this one. Obviously, a gallon of water and one tea leaf won't make a great brew. Use one whole leaf mesh bag (or teabag or 1 tsp of loose-leaf tea) per person and add enough water for an average mug – 300ml (10fl oz).

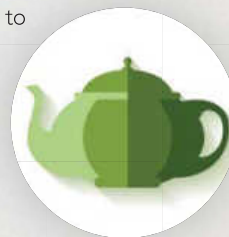
5 BREW FOR 3 MINUTES

Quality tea has big leaves (rather than dusty sweepings off the floor!) and so they need a good brew time. Don't dunk and run. It takes time – 3 minutes, on average – for the tea leaves to infuse and release their flavour into the water.



6 WARM THE POT

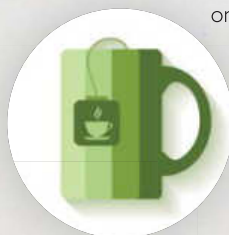
This really does make a difference if you are making black tea. There is simply no point in putting boiling water into a freezing-cold teapot, it just lowers the temperature of the water straightaway – think of it like putting hot food on a cold plate – plus, the taste won't be half as good. Whether or not you want to go and keep your teapot all cosy with a knitted cover is another thing; though, there's no harm in that.



7 ENJOY THE YUMMY TEA

Allow the brew to cool – once the tea has been separated from the water it is good to let it cool a little. Not

only will piping hot water burn your mouth, but it will also stop you from tasting the yummy tea flavours you have just been brewing.



8 PUT THE MILK IN FIRST, SECOND OR NEVER?

- Black tea and rooibos taste good with milk.
- Herbals, green tea, white tea and oolong are best enjoyed without the white stuff.

• If you are brewing in a pot and are pouring into a cup – put the milk in first, then add the brewed tea.

• If you are brewing in a mug – pour the milk in second, after the tea leaves or teabag has been removed.





Chai hot cross bun bread and butter pudding cupcakes

Serves 6

FOR THE PUDDINGS

- 300ml (10fl oz) milk
- 300ml (10fl oz) single cream
- 2 tbsp chai whole leaf tea
- 2 free-range eggs
- 75g (2¾oz) golden caster sugar
- 6 hot cross buns
- 50g (1¾oz) butter, softened

- 1 Pour the milk and cream into a pan and sprinkle in the chai. Bring to just below the boil, remove from the heat and then leave to steep for 5 minutes.
- 2 Meanwhile, whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl and strain the tea-infused cream mixture through a sieve (to remove the tea leaves) and onto the eggs and sugar, whisking all the time. You now have a custard; it will thicken up as it bakes.
- 3 Cut each hot cross bun horizontally into three equally sized slices and butter one side of each piece. Place the bottom third of each bun into the bases of six 200ml (7fl oz) ramekins, mugs or even large tea cups.
- 4 Pour a little of the custard into each ramekin or cup, then add the middle section of the buns. Add more of the custard to each until it is all used up, then top with the last slices of the buns, with the cross uppermost. Press slightly, but don't submerge the tops. Set aside for 30 minutes to soak. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 5 Arrange the ramekins or cups in a roasting tin, place in the oven and carefully fill the tin with boiling water until it comes halfway up the cups. Bake for about 20 minutes or until just cooked, but a bit wobbly in the centre. Serve warm but not hot.

Chai and chestnut cupcakes with chilli chai tea glaze

Serves 6

FOR THE CHAI GLAZE

50g (1¾oz) icing sugar

juice of 1 lemon

2 chilli chai tea temples (or 4 tsp chilli chai or chai whole leaf tea)

FOR THE CUPCAKES

250ml (8½fl oz) milk

250g (9oz) cooked chestnuts

1 tbsp chai whole leaf tea

2 free-range eggs, beaten

100g (3½oz) golden caster sugar

180g (6½oz) plain flour

2 tsp baking powder

a pinch of salt

- 1 First, make the glaze. Place the icing sugar, lemon juice and tea temples (or whole leaf tea, if using) into a small pan and heat gently. Remove from the heat, then set aside to cool and infuse. Meanwhile,

pour milk into another pan and pop in the chestnuts and other whole leaf tea. Bring to just below the boil, then remove from the heat and leave to infuse for 30 minutes.

- 2 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with cases. Meanwhile, beat the eggs in a large bowl and then strain the infused milk over the eggs and beat together. Reserve one-third of the chestnuts from the sieve and transfer the rest to the bowl of a food processor along with the sugar and whizz until smooth. Whisk this into the egg and milk mixture.
- 3 Sift the flour, baking powder and salt together into a bowl, crumble in the reserved chestnuts and fold this into the egg mixture.
- 4 Place a spoonful of mixture into each paper case, filling each just over halfway. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.
- 5 Remove the tin from the oven and transfer to a wire rack to cool. Lift or strain the tea temples (or tea leaves, if using) from the syrup, and brush it on the top of each cake while they're still hot (this makes a shinier glaze) and leave to cool for 5 minutes before lifting the cakes out of the tin and onto the rack to cool completely.



Matcha and pistachio cupcakes

Makes 24

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 180g (6½oz) self-raising flour**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- 1 tbsps matcha**
- a pinch of sea salt**
- 180g (6½oz) unsalted butter, softened**
- 180g (6½oz) caster sugar**
- ½ tsp vanilla extract**
- 3 large free-range eggs**
- 100g (3½oz) pistachios, chopped**

FOR THE FROSTING

- 300ml (10fl oz) double cream**
- ½ vanilla pod**
- 100g (3½oz) white chocolate, chopped**

- 1** For the frosting, put half of the cream in a pan. Cut the vanilla pod in half lengthways and scrape out the seeds into the cream, and drop in the pod. Bring to just below the boil, then remove from the heat, remove and discard the used pod and whisk in the

chopped chocolate until smooth. Cool, then place in the fridge and leave to chill for about an hour.

- 2** When the frosting's almost ready, preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas Mark 4 and line two 12-hole cupcake tins with paper cases.
- 3** In a bowl, sift the flour, baking powder, matcha and salt together.
- 4** In a separate bowl, beat the butter, sugar and vanilla together until very smooth. Add the eggs one at a time, adding some flour halfway through, if necessary, and beating well after each addition.
- 5** Fold the flour mixture into the egg mixture along with three-quarters of the chopped pistachios – keep the rest for decorating later on.
- 6** Spoon the cupcake mixture into the cases and bake for 15-20 minutes or until risen and slightly golden.
- 7** Remove the cupcakes from the oven and transfer to a wire rack to cool for 5 minutes, then remove from the tins and leave to cool completely.
- 8** In another bowl, whip the remaining cream until it reaches soft peaks. Beat in one-third of the whipped cream into the chilled chocolate cream mixture and then fold in the remainder. Transfer to a piping bag ready for decorating the cupcakes. Pipe the frosting onto the cupcakes, spread a little with a knife and then top with a sprinkle of the remaining chopped pistachios.

Indulgent

CUPCAKES



Rhubarb meringue cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

300g (11 oz) rhubarb, finely chopped

3 tbsp sugar

300g (11 oz) plain flour

1 tsp baking powder

100g (3½ oz) caster sugar

2 free-range eggs, beaten

200ml (7 fl oz) milk

100g (3½ oz) butter, melted

FOR THE MERINGUE TOPPING

2 free-range egg whites

110g (4 oz) caster sugar

flaked almonds

TO DECORATE

icing sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Mix the rhubarb with the sugar and put into a small baking dish. Bake for about 10 minutes until just tender. Drain well and set aside to cool.
- 3 Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl. Stir in the caster sugar. Beat the eggs with the milk and melted butter; stir into the dry ingredients with the rhubarb until just combined. The mixture will be lumpy.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until risen and golden. Cool in the tin for 15 minutes.
- 5 For the topping, whisk the egg whites until soft peaks form. Gradually add the sugar, whisking continuously, until stiff peaks form and the mixture is thick and glossy. Spoon the meringue roughly over the cupcakes and sprinkle with flaked almonds.
- 6 Return to the oven for 4-7 minutes, until the meringue is set. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 7 Sift a little icing sugar over the cakes.





Red wine cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

115g (4oz) plain flour
35g (1½oz) cocoa powder
110g (4oz) light brown sugar
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp salt
2 free-range eggs
225ml (8fl oz) red wine
50ml (1¾fl oz) sunflower oil

FOR THE FROSTING

70g (2½oz) unsalted butter
200g (7oz) cream cheese
400g (14oz) icing sugar
2 tbsp ginger syrup, from the stem ginger jar
TO DECORATE
chopped stem ginger
fig slices

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin or use muffin cups.
- 2 Sift the flour, cocoa powder, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt into a mixing bowl.
- 3 Whisk together the eggs, red wine and oil. Pour into the dry mixture and stir until smooth.
- 4 Pour into the paper cases and bake for about 20 minutes until just firm to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely or cool in the cups.
- 5 For the cream cheese frosting, beat the butter until soft, then beat in the cheese until blended. Sift in the icing sugar and stir in the ginger syrup until smooth. Chill until firm enough to pipe.
- 6 Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe a swirl on top of each cake. Sprinkle with stem ginger and decorate with fig slices.



Pumpkin and beer cupcakes

Makes 24

FOR THE CUPCAKES

110g (4oz) plain flour
¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp mixed spice
2 tbsp butter, melted
40g (1½oz) sugar
50g (1¾oz) light brown sugar
1 free-range egg
112ml (4fl oz) pumpkin purée
85ml (3fl oz) pumpkin ale
1 tbsp chopped pumpkin seeds

FOR THE TOPPING

175g (6oz) cream cheese
1 tbsp butter
250g (9oz) icing sugar
2 tbsp maple syrup
TO DECORATE
pumpkin seeds

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 24 mini muffin tin holes.
- 2 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder, spice and salt into a mixing bowl.
- 3 Whisk together the butter and both sugars until combined.
- 4 Add the eggs, pumpkin purée and ale to the butter/sugar mixture and mix well. Gently fold into the flour mixture with the seeds.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 10-15 minutes until golden and risen. Cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the topping, beat the cream cheese and butter until softened. Gradually sift in the icing sugar and beat until smooth. Beat in the maple syrup.
- 7 Pipe on top of the cakes and sprinkle with pumpkin seeds.



Baked apple cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

250g (9oz) self-raising flour

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp ground cinnamon

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

2 free-range eggs

125ml (4½fl oz) milk

4 tbsp sunflower oil

2 apples, peeled and finely chopped

FOR THE FROSTING

3 free-range egg whites

5 tbsp water

180g (6oz) caster sugar

200g (7oz) butter, diced

50g (1¾oz) speculaas biscuit crumbs

TO DECORATE

speculaas

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2** Sift the flour, baking powder and cinnamon into a mixing bowl. Stir in the sugar.
- 3** Whisk together the eggs, milk and oil. Pour into the dry ingredients and mix until just combined, then stir in the apples.
- 4** Spoon the mixture into the paper cases and bake for about 20-25 minutes until the cupcakes are well risen and firm.
- 5** For the frosting, whisk the egg whites until stiff.
- 6** Heat the water and sugar in a pan until the sugar has dissolved. Heat to 118°-120°C until a little of the mixture can be rolled into a soft ball between your finger and thumb when dropped into cold water; but not turned into a caramel.
- 7** Slowly trickle the sugar into the egg whites, whisking constantly until cooled. Gradually whisk in the butter, a little at a time until incorporated. Stir in the biscuit crumbs.
- 8** Spoon into a piping bag and pipe on top of the cakes. Decorate with speculaas.

Banoffee cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

125g (4½oz) self-raising flour

100g (3½oz) butter

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

2 free-range eggs

1 tsp baking powder

2 very ripe bananas

12 tsp dulce de leche

FOR THE CHOCOLATE FROSTING

125ml (4½fl oz) whipping cream

250g (9oz) plain chocolate, chopped

1 tsp vanilla extract

2 tbsp butter

TO DECORATE

12 slices of banana

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Put all the ingredients except the bananas and dulce de leche into a mixing bowl and beat with an electric whisk until light and fluffy. Alternatively, beat well with a wooden spoon.
- 3 Mash the bananas and stir into the mixture until blended.
- 4 Spoon a little mixture into the paper cases and top each one with ½ tsp of dulce de leche. Cover completely with mixture and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 For the chocolate frosting, heat the cream in a pan and bring to a boil. Immediately remove from the heat and pour over the chocolate. Stir until the chocolate has melted, then stir in the vanilla. Add the butter gradually and stir until blended. Cool, then chill until the mixture is thick enough to pipe.
- 6 Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe on top of the cakes. Decorate with banana slices.





Apricot cheesecake cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

110g (4oz) finely crushed digestive biscuits
3 tbsp butter, melted
110g (4oz) cream cheese
160g (6oz) sugar
1½ tbsp plain flour
2 free-range eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
50ml (1¾fl oz) soured cream
50ml (1¾fl oz) double cream
12 slices of dried ready to eat apricots

FOR THE TOPPING

110g (4oz) butter
200g (7oz) cream cheese
100g (3½oz) icing sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
TO DECORATE
lemon syrup

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Stir together the biscuit crumbs and melted butter. Divide between the paper cases and press evenly into the bases. Bake for 5 minutes, then set aside to cool.
- 3 Whisk the cream cheese, sugar and flour until well blended.
- 4 Whisk in the eggs, one at a time, until smooth.
- 5 Stir in the vanilla, soured cream and cream and mix until just combined. Spoon on top of the cooled bases, to fill about three-quarters full, reserving some of the mixture. Place the apricots on top and cover completely with the cake mixture.
- 6 Bake for about 20 minutes – the centres should wobble slightly. Cool, then cover loosely with clingfilm and chill for 2 hours.
- 7 For the topping, beat the butter until soft, then beat in the cheese until blended. Sift in the sugar and stir in the vanilla until smooth.
- 8 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe a swirl on top of each cake. Drizzle with lemon syrup.



Cappuccino cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

85g (3oz) butter
55g (2oz) light brown sugar
1 free-range egg, beaten
125ml (4½fl oz) double cream
5 tbsp strong black coffee
275g (10oz) plain flour
1 tbsp baking powder
a pinch of salt
75g (2½oz) chocolate chips

FOR THE CREAM

300ml (11fl oz) double cream
3 tbsp icing sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
TO DECORATE
ground cinnamon

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin or use muffin cups.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy, then stir in the egg until smooth.
- 3 Pour in the cream and coffee and stir until blended.
- 4 Sift in the flour, baking powder and salt and stir until just combined. Gently stir in the chocolate chips.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for about 20 minutes until risen and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely or cool in the cups.
- 6 For the cream, whisk together all the ingredients until thick but not stiff. Spoon onto the cakes and spread roughly. Sprinkle the cakes with ground cinnamon.



Hokkaido cupcakes with maple syrup frosting

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

400g (14oz) Hokkaido squash, roughly chopped

350g (12oz) light brown sugar

4 large free-range eggs

a pinch of salt

300g (11oz) plain flour

2 heaped tsp baking powder

3 tbsp walnuts

1 tsp ground cinnamon

175ml (6fl oz) sunflower oil

FOR THE FROSTING

175g (6oz) cream cheese

3 tbsp soft butter

2 tbsp maple syrup

½ tsp vanilla extract

200g (7oz) icing sugar

TO DECORATE

ground cinnamon

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2** Blend the squash in a food processor until finely chopped. Add the sugar, eggs, salt, flour, baking powder, walnuts, cinnamon and oil and process until just combined.
- 3** Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and risen. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4** For the frosting, beat together all the ingredients until thick and smooth. Spoon into a piping bag and pipe onto the cakes. Sprinkle with cinnamon.



Mojito cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR BRUSHING

2 tbsp white rum

2 sprigs of mint

FOR THE TOPPING

335g (12oz) unsalted butter

425g (15oz) icing sugar

1½ tbsp lime juice

3 tbsp white rum

TO DECORATE

lime slices

mint leaves

FOR THE CUPCAKES

110ml (4fl oz) buttermilk

12g (½oz) mint leaves, bruised

175g (6oz) plain flour

1½ tsp baking powder

¼ tsp salt

110g (4oz) unsalted butter

225g (8oz) sugar

2 free-range eggs

finely grated zest and juice of

1 unwaxed lime

2 tbsp white rum

¼ tsp vanilla extract

- 1 For the cupcakes, combine the buttermilk and mint in a pan and heat gently until just starting to steam (do not simmer), then remove from the heat and cover. Leave to infuse for up to 30 minutes.
- 2 Press the milk into a bowl through a sieve. Set aside.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin or use muffin cups.

- 4 Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt and set aside.
- 5 Beat together the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until they are pale, light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing thoroughly after each addition.
- 6 Add the lime zest, lime juice, vanilla and rum. Mix until combined.
- 7 Add the dry ingredients in three batches, alternating with the mint buttermilk in two batches. Mix only until just combined.
- 8 Put into the paper cases and bake for about 25 minutes, until just slightly golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out with only moist crumbs attached. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes.
- 9 For brushing, combine the rum and mint sprigs in a small pan over a medium heat until the rum is heated through (do not let it simmer). Remove the pan from the heat, cover, and set aside for 5 minutes.
- 10 Brush the tops of the cupcakes with the mint-infused rum, then place on a wire rack to cool completely or cool in the cups.
- 11 For the topping, beat the butter until soft. Gradually sift in the icing sugar, beating well until incorporated.
- 12 Add the lime juice and rum and beat well.
- 13 Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe on top of the cakes. Decorate with lime slices and mint leaves.

The image shows three apple and vanilla cupcakes with a crumble topping, sitting on a wire rack. The cupcakes are in light brown paper liners. The background is a dark, textured surface with a small bowl of white powder and a metal whisk visible in the upper left.

Apple and vanilla cupcakes

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 225g (8oz) plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 85g (3oz) light brown sugar
- 2 apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 1 free-range egg
- 150ml (5fl oz) soured cream
- 55g (2oz) butter, melted

FOR THE CRUMBLE TOPPING

- 55g (2oz) plain flour
- 30g (1oz) ground almonds
- 75g (2½oz) sugar
- 90g (3oz) butter

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

- 75g (2½oz) unsalted butter
- 250g (9oz) icing sugar
- 75ml (2½fl oz) sweetened condensed milk
- 75ml (2½fl oz) double cream
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

TO DECORATE

- icing sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Place paper cases in a 12-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl. Stir in the sugar and apples.
- 3 Mix together the egg, soured cream and melted butter.
- 4 Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and stir lightly until everything is just combined. The mixture will be lumpy.
- 5 For the crumble topping, mix all the ingredients with your hands, until the mixture is crumbly and clumps together.
- 6 Spoon the cake mixture into the tins, sprinkle over the crumble and bake for about 20 minutes until the cupcakes are well risen and the crumble is golden. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 7 For the buttercream, beat the butter until very soft and creamy. Whisk in the remaining ingredients until smooth.
- 8 Carefully slice the tops off the cakes.
- 9 Spread the buttercream on the cakes and replace the tops. Sift icing sugar over the top.



Kir Royal cupcakes

Makes 24

FOR THE CUPCAKES

110g (4oz) butter

110g (4oz) caster sugar

2 free-range eggs, beaten

110g (4oz) self-raising flour

1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE TOPPING

300ml (1 fl oz) double cream

2 tbsp icing sugar

2 tbsp redcurrant cassis

TO DECORATE

24 small sprigs of redcurrants

2 free-range egg whites

1-2 tbsp caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 24 mini cupcake tin holes.
- 2 Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs until well blended. Sift in the flour and fold in gently with the vanilla, until just combined.
- 3 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 10-15 minutes until golden and springy to the touch. Place on a wire rack to allow to cool completely.
- 4 For the topping, whisk together the cream and icing sugar until thick. Stir in the cassis.
- 5 Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe on top of the cakes. Chill until ready to serve.
- 6 To decorate, lightly whisk the egg whites until slightly frothy. With a pastry brush, paint the egg white onto the redcurrants. Sprinkle over the sugar; then place on a wire rack in a cool, dry place for about 2 hours until the coating hardens. Place a sprig on top of the cream and sprinkle lightly with caster sugar.



Spiced date and pecan cupcakes

Makes 12-15

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 125ml (4½fl oz) water
- 300g (11oz) dried dates, pitted
- 175g (6oz) plain flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 170ml (6fl oz) double cream
- 125ml (4½fl oz) sunflower oil
- 3 free-range eggs
- 150g (5oz) chopped pecans

FOR THE STREUSEL TOPPING

- 225g (8oz) light brown sugar
- 110g (4oz) plain flour
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 8 tbsp melted butter

FOR THE CARAMEL SAUCE

- 350g (12oz) dark muscovado sugar
- 200g (7oz) unsalted butter
- 250ml (9fl oz) double cream

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Line 12-15 muffin tin holes with non-stick baking paper or paper cases. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper.
- 2 Put the water and dates in a food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Tip into a mixing bowl.
- 3 Sift in the flour, baking powder and spice. Add the cream and mix well until combined.
- 4 Whisk the oil and eggs with an electric whisk until foamy. Gradually whisk into the date mixture until just combined. Stir in the pecans.
- 5 For the streusel topping, mix all the ingredients until crumbly.
- 6 Spoon the cupcake mixture into the paper cases and sprinkle some of the streusel topping over the cake mixture. Sprinkle the remainder over the baking tray.
- 7 Bake the cupcakes for 20-25 minutes until risen and firm. Bake the streusel for the last 15 minutes of cooking time until golden. Cool the cupcakes in the tin for 10 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely. Cool the streusel on the baking tray.
- 8 For the caramel sauce, put all the ingredients in a pan over a low heat and stir until the sugar has dissolved.
- 9 Bring to a simmer and cook gently for 5-7 minutes, stirring, until golden brown. Set aside to cool and thicken – the sauce will thicken as it cools.
- 10 Spoon the sauce over the cupcakes and sprinkle the baked streusel over the top.



Cadbury's Creme Egg cupcakes

By Sarah Sibley from Bake With Sarah (www.bakewithsarah.com)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

150g (5¼oz) soft butter

150g (5¼oz) caster sugar

3 medium free-range eggs, beaten

130g (4½oz) self-raising flour

20g (¾oz) cocoa powder

**12 large, 12 small or 24 small
Creme Eggs, depending on
your preference**

FOR THE TOPPING

**50g (1¾oz) unsalted
butter, softened**

140g (5oz) liquid glucose

1 tsp vanilla extract

4 tsp water

300g (10½oz) icing sugar

**a few drops of yellow
food colouring**

- 1** A few hours before making the cupcakes, place the Creme Eggs in the freezer. If you don't, your cakes won't work properly and the eggs melt into the cake and become a gooey mess.
- 2** When you are sure the eggs are all completely frozen, preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3.
- 3** Line a muffin tin with 12 large muffin-sized cupcake cases.
- 4** Cream together the butter and sugar until pale and creamy.
- 5** Slowly add the beaten eggs.
- 6** Finally, add the flour and cocoa and mix thoroughly until smooth.
- 7** Spoon a small amount of the batter into each of the cases.
- 8** Remove the Creme Eggs from the freezer (leave them there until the last minute), remove the wrapper and place them into the cases on top of the batter. You can either use one large creme egg in each, placed on its side, two small eggs standing up side by side, or one of the small eggs laying on its side, depending on your preference.
- 9** Finally, cover the Creme Eggs with the remaining batter and bake for around 30 minutes.
- 10** Remove from the tin and leave to cool on a wire rack.
- 11** For the topping, whisk together the softened butter, glucose, vanilla and water until combined.
- 12** Add the icing sugar and whisk together until creamy and lump free.
- 13** Take a few spoonfuls of the goo and place into a separate bowl with some yellow colouring, mixing until completely blended.
- 14** Once the cakes are cool, put a blob of the white goo on top of the first cake and, using a decorating tool or the handle of a teaspoon, spread the goo out into a splat shape. Add a small blob of the yellow goo in the middle and spread it out into a yolk shape. Repeat for the rest of the cakes.



Mint Chocolate Aero cupcakes

By Sarah Sibley from Bake With Sarah (www.bakewithsarah.com)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

175g (6oz) soft butter

175g (6oz) caster sugar

3 medium free-range eggs, beaten

125g (4½oz) self-raising flour

80g (3oz) cocoa powder

FOR THE TOPPING

36 Mint Aero balls

250g (9oz) unsalted butter, softened

500g (1lb 2oz) fondant icing sugar

1 tsp peppermint essence

green food colouring

- 1** A few hours before making these cupcakes, you need to place the Aero balls in the freezer. If you don't, the cakes won't work properly and the balls melt into the cake and make a gooey mess.
- 2** When you are sure the balls are completely frozen, preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3.
- 3** Line a muffin tin with 12 large muffin-sized cupcake cases.
- 4** Cream together the butter and sugar until pale and creamy.
- 5** Slowly add the beaten eggs.
- 6** Finally add the flour and 50g (1¾oz) of the cocoa and mix thoroughly until smooth.
- 7** Spoon a small amount of the batter into each of the cases.
- 8** Remove the Aero balls from the freezer (leave them in there right until the last minute) and place two, side by side, into each of the cases on top of the batter.
- 9** Finally, cover the balls with the remaining batter and bake for around 30 minutes.
- 10** Remove from the tin and leave to cool completely on a wire rack.
- 11** Cream the softened butter and then add the icing sugar and mix together until creamy and lump free.
- 12** Take about a third of the buttercream, place it in a separate bowl and put to one side.
- 13** Add the peppermint and a small amount of green colouring to the larger bowl of buttercream and mix thoroughly.
- 14** Add the remaining cocoa powder to the smaller bowl of buttercream and mix thoroughly.
- 15** Once the cakes are cool, pipe a swirl of the green frosting onto each cake.
- 16** Pipe a single ruffle of chocolate buttercream on top in the middle.
- 17** Finally, place another Aero ball on top of the chocolate buttercream.



Chocolate brownie cupcakes

By Flora (www.flora.com)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 85g (3oz) Flora Buttery
- 225g (8oz) plain chocolate
- 2 large free-range eggs
- 200g (7oz) soft muscovado sugar
- 140g (4½oz) plain flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE ICING

- 55g (2oz) Flora Buttery
- 225g (8oz) icing sugar, sieved
- 1 tbsp milk
- 50g (1¾oz) white chocolate, melted

TO DECORATE

- 55g (2oz) desiccated coconut
- green food colouring
- chocolate football decorations or rice paper footballs

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5.
- 2 Gently melt the chocolate and Flora in a bowl over hot water.
- 3 Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a large bowl with the vanilla until light and creamy. Fold in the chocolate and flour and spoon the mixture into 10-12 paper cases or greased bun tins.
- 4 Bake for around 25-30 minutes until soft and springy to the touch. Cool on a wire tray.
- 5 Mix the icing ingredients together and spread over the cakes. Mix the coconut with a little green colouring and sprinkle over the icing, then decorate with chocolate footballs.



Raisin and fudge cupcakes

By Flora (www.flora.com)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 115g (4oz) Flora Buttery
- 115g (4oz) caster sugar
- 2 medium free-range eggs
- 115g (4oz) self-raising flour
- 25g (1oz) each of raisins and chopped fudge

FOR THE ICING

- 55g (2oz) Flora Buttery
- 225g (8oz) icing sugar, sieved
- ½ tsp vanilla extract or 1 tbsp maple syrup
- chopped fudge, to decorate

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a muffin tin with 10-12 paper cases.
- 2 Place all the cupcake ingredients in a mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon for 2-3 minutes until well mixed.
- 3 Place dessert spoons of the mixture in the paper cases.
- 4 Bake for around 20 minutes until soft and springy to the touch. Cool on a wire tray.
- 5 Mix the icing ingredients together and then spread or pipe over the cakes. Decorate with chopped fudge.



Lotus Biscoff cupcakes

By Britt Whyatt from She Who Bakes (www.shewhobakes.co.uk)

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 200g (7oz) unsalted butter**
 - 200g (7oz) golden caster sugar**
 - 200g (7oz) self-raising flour**
 - 50g (1½oz) plain flour**
 - 3 medium free-range eggs**
 - 100g (3½oz) Lotus Biscoff spread**
- ### FOR THE BUTTERCREAM FROSTING
- 80g (3oz) unsalted butter, softened**
 - 40g (1½oz) Lotus Biscoff spread**
 - 300g (10½oz) icing sugar**
 - a dash of milk**
 - Lotus biscuits, to decorate**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 140°C/Gas Mark 1.
- 2** Cream together the butter, golden caster sugar and Lotus Biscoff spread, then add in the eggs.
- 3** Once mixed, add in the plain and self-raising flours, then pour your mix into a large piping bag.
- 4** Line a muffin tin with cupcake cases and pipe your mix in three-quarters full. (Alternatively, spoon your mix into the cases.)
- 5** Bake in the oven for 35-40 minutes.
- 6** Once baked, leave to cool in the tin briefly, before taking out and leaving to cool fully on the side.
- 7** For the buttercream, mix the softened butter for about 5 minutes or until it has become pale in colour.
- 8** Add in the icing sugar and a splash of milk to combine.
- 9** Finally, add in the Lotus Biscoff spread to taste, transfer to a piping bag with a nozzle (I used an 1J), pipe onto your cooled cupcakes and top with a biscuit.

York® Peppermint Pattie cupcakes

By Sally McKenny

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

43g (1½oz) unsweetened natural cocoa powder

95g (3½oz) plain flour

¾ tsp baking powder

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

¼ tsp salt

2 large free-range eggs, at room temperature

100g (3½oz) sugar

110g (4oz) light brown sugar

80ml (3fl oz) vegetable oil

2 tsp vanilla extract

120ml (4¼oz) buttermilk

FOR THE PEPPERMINT VANILLA FROSTING

227g (8oz) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

540g (1lb 3oz) icing sugar, plus 60g (2oz) if needed

60ml (2fl oz) double cream, plus 1 tbsp if needed

1 tsp vanilla extract

¼ tsp peppermint extract, plus more if needed

⅛ tsp salt, plus a pinch if needed

6 snack size York® Peppermint Patties, sliced in half

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with cupcake liners. Set aside.
- 2** For the cupcakes, whisk the cocoa powder, flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt together in a large bowl until combined. Set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs, sugar, brown sugar, oil and vanilla together until completely smooth. Pour half of the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients, then add half of the buttermilk. Gently whisk – about five stirs. Repeat with the remaining wet ingredients and buttermilk. Whisk until just combined; do not overmix. The batter will be a little thin.
- 3** Pour or spoon the batter into cupcake liners, filling halfway. Bake for 18-21 minutes, or until the tops of the cupcakes spring back when gently touched and a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Do not overbake – the cakes quickly dry out. Allow to cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.
- 4** For the frosting, with a hand-held or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment, beat the butter on medium speed in a large bowl until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add the icing sugar, cream, vanilla and peppermint extracts and salt with the mixer running on low. Increase the mixer to high speed and beat for 3 full minutes. Add the extra icing sugar if the frosting is too thin or add the extra cream if the frosting is too thick. Taste the frosting – add an extra drop of peppermint extract for more peppermint flavour if desired and/or an extra pinch of salt if the frosting is too sweet. Frost the cooled cupcakes and stick a Peppermint Pattie half on each. Leftover prepared cupcakes can be stored covered tightly at room temperature for up to three days.

TIP If you wish to prepare a day in advance, keep cupcakes covered tightly at room temperature and refrigerate the frosting in an airtight container. Bring the frosting to room temperature before spreading on the cupcakes. Unfrosted cupcakes can be frozen for up to 2 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before frosting and serving.



The recipes on pages 92-95 are taken from Sally's *Candy Addiction* by Sally McKenny, published by Race Point, RRP £16.





Toffee lover's cupcakes

By Sally McKenny

Makes 18

FOR THE CUPCAKES

230g (8oz) plain flour

1 ¼ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

3 large free-range eggs, at room temperature and separated

114g (4oz) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

300g (10½oz) sugar

1 tbsp vanilla extract

160ml (5¼oz) whole milk, room temperature

FOR THE CHOCOLATE TOPPING

114g (4oz) unsalted butter

204g (7oz) milk chocolate chips

215g (7½oz) chopped Heath® bars

FOR THE MILK CHOCOLATE FROSTING

227g (4oz) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

420g (15oz) icing sugar, plus 2 tbsp if needed

43g (1½oz) unsweetened cocoa powder

½ tsp salt, plus a pinch if needed

2 tsp vanilla extract

3 tbsp double cream or milk, plus 1 tbsp if needed

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with cupcake liners. This recipe makes 18 cupcakes, so you will have 6 cupcakes to bake in a second batch.
- 2 For the cupcakes, sift the flour, baking powder and salt together in a large bowl. Set aside.
- 3 With a hand-held or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat the egg whites on high speed in a medium bowl until soft peaks form, about 2-3 minutes. Set aside.
- 4 With a hand-held or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on high speed in a large bowl until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Add the sugar and beat on high speed for 3-4 minutes until creamed. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Add the egg yolks and vanilla extract. Beat on medium-high speed until combined. Scrape the bowl again as needed. With the mixer on low speed, add the dry ingredients in three additions, alternating with the milk and mixing each addition just until incorporated. Do not overmix. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in the egg whites until combined. The batter will be slightly thick.
- 5 Spoon the batter into the cupcake liners, filling halfway. Bake for 22-24 minutes, or until the tops of the cupcakes spring back when gently touched and a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Allow to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the chocolate topping, melt the butter and chocolate chips in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes. Once melted and smooth, remove the pan from the heat. Allow to cool and slightly thicken for 5 minutes, then pour into a wide, shallow bowl. Pour the chopped Heath bars into a separate wide, shallow bowl. Dip the top of each cooled cupcake into the chocolate mixture, then roll the top edges in the Heath bars. Set the cupcakes aside for 20 minutes to allow the chocolate topping to set.
- 7 For the frosting, with a hand-held or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment, beat the butter on medium speed in a large bowl until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add the icing sugar, cocoa powder, salt, vanilla, and 3 tbsp cream with the mixer running on low. Increase to high speed and beat for 3 full minutes. Add 2 tbsp of icing sugar if the frosting is too thin or add 1 tbsp of cream if the frosting is too thick. Taste the frosting and add a pinch of salt if it is too sweet. Pipe or spread the frosting over the chocolate topping.

Oreo cupcakes

By Britt Whyatt from She Who Bakes
(www.shewhobakes.co.uk)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

250g (9oz) plain flour

a pinch of salt

2 tsp baking powder

190g (6¾oz) caster sugar

115g (4oz) unsalted butter

2 large free-range eggs

120ml (4fl oz) full fat milk

2 tsp vanilla extract

12 Oreo cookies

FOR THE FROSTING

a small bowl of crushed Oreos

450g (1lb) icing sugar

225g (8oz) full fat cream cheese

130g (4½oz) unsalted butter, softened

2 tsp vanilla extract

- 1 Preheat the oven to 140°C/Gas Mark 1 and then cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
- 2 Add the eggs one by one, combining as you go.
- 3 Sift in the flour, salt and baking powder.
- 4 Finally, add in the milk, one third at a time and the vanilla extract and mix on a high speed for approximately 6-8 minutes.
- 5 Line your muffin tin with deep cupcake cases and pop an Oreo in the bottom of each one.
- 6 Pipe the cupcake mix into your cases so that they are three-quarters full. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes.
- 7 Put some Oreos in a sandwich bag and beat them up so they are all crumbly. Mix together the butter and cream cheese so they are combined, then add in the icing sugar and vanilla extract. Finally, mix in the crushed Oreos and top your cupcakes however you like.



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IN THE KITCHEN WITH...

Sarah Sibley

Sarah's cupcakes have won international awards and made headlines across the world – and even her 'world's grossest cupcake' is delicious!

Q When did you start baking?

I started baking what I would call 'properly' at the end of 2012. Before then I had only made an occasional cake.

Q What was the first thing that you made?

The first half decent thing I made – and what made me decide to take my baking to the next level and try baking as a career – was a set of Halloween cupcakes for a friend's party. They turned out much better than expected and my friends all encouraged me to set up a little business making cupcakes.

Q What interested you about cupcakes in particular?

After starting out making cupcakes, I soon progressed to making large celebration and wedding cakes, but my favourite thing has always remained making cupcakes. I love the fact that you can easily make multiple flavours and designs for the same occasion and I love piping buttercream.

Q When and why did you set up Bake With Sarah?

I decided to set up at the end of 2014. As I have a background in journalism and web design, and love creating recipes, it seemed the perfect next step for me.

Q Can you tell us about your Baketopia project?

Baketopia was a project I worked on through a PR creative known as Miss Cakehead for National Baking Week in 2013. I made lots of floral cupcakes to be part of an edible landscape, which also featured a life-size (well, horse-sized) unicorn cake by the Tattooed Bakers.

Q How do you decide what to make for cake competitions?

It is always a struggle for me to decide what I'm going to enter into competitions. I'm very indecisive and I generally come up with hundreds of ideas and change my mind repeatedly up until the week of the show. One of my new year's resolutions is to work on that! I was so pleased to finally win gold at Cake International in November 2015 for my 'Lest We Forget' cupcakes.

Jamie, Charlie, Robbie and Alfie, as I am allergic to milk and often can't taste things myself. The boys don't hold back with their opinions though, so I'm never left with any doubt about whether it's a good recipe or not!

Q How do you work with new flavours and what's your favourite flavour combination?

I love coming up with new flavour combinations for cupcakes. I take

My 'Mango Fly Larvae Removal' cupcakes went viral when it was dubbed 'the world's grossest cupcake'.

Q What led you to create the 'world's grossest cupcake'?

This was for another of Miss Cakehead's projects called 'Eat Your Heart Out – Feed The Beast'. Myself and a team of other bakers created gruesome bakes for a pop up Halloween cake shop in London. A picture of my 'Mango Fly Larvae Removal' cupcakes went viral when it got picked up by the Huffington Post and they dubbed it 'the world's grossest cupcake'. It even featured in the *Ripley's Believe It or Not* book and one was eaten by Huey Morgan on the *Wright Stuff* TV show, which was a personal career highlight for me.

inspiration from all over the place and if I possibly can turn it into a cupcake, I will! My personal favourite is red wine and chocolate, which featured in the *Cupcake Heaven* Summer 2015 issue.

Q Do you have any advice for piping buttercream on cakes?

My top tip for piping buttercream would be to always maintain a consistent pressure and speed when piping so you get even results across the cupcake. Also hold the nozzle above the cake and drop down onto it, rather than dragging the nozzle through the buttercream. There is a basic piping tutorial on my website (www.bakewithsarah.com), which is very easy to follow.

Q How do you go about developing new recipes?

When I come up with an idea for a new bake, I start out with a basic recipe for whatever it might be, then add and change things as I go. The finished product then undergoes a vigorous taste testing by my husband and our boys,

Q What's next for you?

This year I'm going to be working on promoting Bake With Sarah, entering some more cake competitions and I am also hoping to put out a book in the near future.

Chocolate Guinness cupcakes

By Sarah Sibley from Bake With Sarah (www.bakewithsarah.com)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

100g (3½oz) self-raising flour

50g (1¾oz) cocoa powder

200g (7oz) caster sugar

115g (4oz) butter

1 free-range egg

115ml (4fl oz) Guinness/stout

75ml (2¾fl oz) buttermilk

FOR THE FROSTING

250g (9oz) unsalted butter, softened

1 tsp vanilla extract

500g (1lb 2oz) icing sugar

4 tsp milk

- 1 Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3. Line a muffin tin with 12 large black cupcake cases.
- 2 Place the flour, cocoa and sugar in a large bowl and mix together.
- 3 In a separate bowl melt the butter – 1 minute in the microwave should be fine. Add the egg and mix thoroughly. Add the Guinness and mix again. Add the buttermilk and mix. It will look like a curdled mess at this point, but that's fine.
- 4 Make a well in the dry ingredients and add some of the liquid. Mix it in with a spatula or wooden spoon. Add some more and again mix it in. Finally, add the rest of the liquid and mix to a smooth batter.
- 5 Carefully spoon the mixture into the cases and bake for around 30 minutes or until a cocktail stick inserted in a cupcake centre comes out clean.
- 6 Transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- 7 For the frosting, mix the softened butter and vanilla in a large bowl.
- 8 Add the sifted icing sugar and start to mix, then add the milk and continue to mix until you have a smooth frosting. Spread on top of the cupcakes and top with a sugarpaste shamrock.



ON SALE
3 MARCH

Baking

HEAVEN

Next issue

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Indulge the whole
family with our best
ever Easter recipes

TOP TRENDS

Discover which bakes
will be taking the UK by
storm in 2016 & how to
bake them

CAKE SOS

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* Contents subject to change

Lighter bakes

CUPCAKES



Mini muesli cupcakes

Makes 9

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 65g (2¼oz) muesli
- 70g (2½oz) wholemeal self-raising flour
- 50g (1¾oz) sugar
- 25g (1oz) grated carrot
- 70g (2½oz) grated courgette
- 30g (1oz) sultanas
- 1 small free-range egg, beaten
- 38ml (1½fl oz) sunflower oil
- 110ml (4fl oz) semi-skimmed milk

FOR THE TOPPING

- 225ml (8fl oz) low fat Greek yoghurt, drained in a sieve overnight
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 50g (1¾oz) icing sugar

TO DECORATE

- pink sugar pearls

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 9 mini muffin tin holes.
- 2 Mix together the muesli, flour, sugar, carrot, courgettes and sultanas in a mixing bowl.
- 3 Stir together the egg, oil and milk and add to the dry ingredients until just combined.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 15-20 minutes, until risen and golden. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 For the topping, beat together the strained yoghurt, vanilla and icing sugar until the mixture thickens. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
- 6 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe a swirl on each cake. Sprinkle with pink sugar pearls.





Raspberry almond cupcakes

Makes 9

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 3 tbsp wholemeal self-raising flour
- 1 tbsp white self-raising flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp vanilla Greek yoghurt
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tsp ground almonds
- 1 tbsp raspberries, lightly crushed

FOR THE TOPPING

- 225ml (8fl oz) vanilla Greek yoghurt, drained in a sieve overnight
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 50g (1¼oz) icing sugar

TO DECORATE

- flaked toasted almonds
- 9 raspberries

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 9 holes of a muffin tin.
- 2 Beat together all the cupcake ingredients, except the raspberries, in a mixing bowl until combined. Fold in the raspberries.
- 3 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 15-20 minutes until risen and golden. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 4 For the topping, beat together the strained yoghurt, vanilla and icing sugar until the mixture thickens. Cover and chill for 30 minutes.
- 5 Spoon into a piping bag and pipe onto the top of the cakes. Decorate with flaked almonds and place a raspberry in the centre of each cake.



Vegan apple and pear cupcakes

Makes 6

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- ½ tbsp ground flax seeds
- 1½ tbsp warm water
- 1 pear, peeled and chopped
- ½ apple, peeled and chopped
- ¾ tbsp cold water
- 1 tbsp sugar
- ½ tbsp soya milk
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp sunflower oil
- a pinch of salt

80g (3oz) plain flour

- ½ tbsp baking powder

FOR THE TOPPING

- 200ml (7fl oz) coconut cream, chilled

- 1 tbsp sugar

- ½-1 tsp vanilla seeds

- ¼ tsp turmeric

TO DECORATE

- flaked toasted almonds

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 6-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Mix together the flax seeds and warm water and leave to stand for 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally until thick.
- 3 Mix together the pear, apple, flax mixture, cold water, sugar, milk, vanilla, oil and salt in a mixing bowl until very smooth.
- 4 Sift in the flour and baking powder and mix until just combined.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-30 minutes until risen and golden. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the topping, beat the coconut cream in a chilled bowl with an electric whisk for 5-8 minutes, until stiff peaks form. Whisk in the sugar, vanilla seeds and turmeric and whisk for a further 1 minute.
- 7 Spoon into a piping bag with a star nozzle and pipe a rosette on top of each cake.
- 8 Sprinkle with toasted almonds.



Lemon yoghurt cupcakes

Makes 6

FOR THE CUPCAKES

115g (4oz) self-raising flour

75g (2½oz) caster sugar

finely grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon

½ tbsp poppy seeds, plus extra to decorate

1 large free-range egg

50ml (1⅓fl oz) plain yoghurt

75ml (2½fl oz) sunflower oil

FOR THE TOPPING

225ml (8fl oz) low fat Greek yoghurt, drained in a sieve overnight

½ tsp vanilla extract

50g (1⅓oz) icing sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 6-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Mix together the flour; sugar; lemon zest and poppy seeds in a mixing bowl.
- 3 Beat the egg into the yoghurt, then stir into the dry ingredients with the oil. Mix together until smooth.
- 4 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 20-25 minutes until risen and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 For the topping, beat together the strained yoghurt, vanilla and icing sugar until the mixture thickens. Cover and chill for 30 minutes.
- 6 Spread on the cakes and sprinkle with poppy seeds.



Vegan chocolate soya cupcakes

Makes 6

FOR THE CUPCAKES

115ml (4fl oz) soya milk

½ tsp vinegar

70g (2½oz) caster sugar

45ml (1½fl oz) vegetable oil

½ tsp vanilla extract

60g (2oz) plain flour

25g (1oz) cocoa powder

¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda

¼ tsp baking powder

a pinch of salt

FOR THE PEANUT BUTTERCREAM

75g (2½oz) smooth peanut butter

50g (1⅓oz) vegan margarine

50g (1⅓oz) icing sugar

¼ tsp vanilla extract

TO DECORATE

vegan chocolate shavings

chopped roasted peanuts

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in 6-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Whisk together the soya milk and vinegar in a mixing bowl and set aside for a few minutes to curdle.
- 3 Add the sugar; oil and vanilla and beat until foamy.
- 4 Sift in the flour; cocoa powder; bicarbonate of soda, baking powder and salt. Stir until blended.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 15-20 minutes, until a skewer inserted into one of the cakes comes out clean. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the peanut buttercream, whisk the peanut butter and margarine with an electric whisk until smooth. Add the icing sugar and vanilla and whisk until fluffy.
- 7 Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe a swirl on top of each cake. Decorate the cakes with chocolate shavings and chopped peanuts.



Blackberry and coconut cupcakes

Makes 6

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 80g (3oz) plain flour
- 50g (1¾oz) sugar
- a pinch of salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 25ml (1fl oz) coconut oil, melted
- ½ tbsp ground flaxseeds
- 1½ tbsp warm water
- 85ml (3fl oz) light coconut milk
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract
- 20g (¾oz) desiccated coconut
- 50g (1¾oz) blackberries

FOR THE SOYA CREAM

- 225ml (8fl oz) unsweetened soya yoghurt
- 50g (1¾oz) icing sugar
- 12g (½oz) cornflour
- 25ml (1fl oz) water
- 2-3 drops of vanilla extract

TO DECORATE

- 6 blackberries
- toasted coconut

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place paper cases in a 6-hole muffin tin.
- 2 Sift the flour, sugar, salt and baking powder into a mixing bowl.
- 3 Mix together the flax seeds and water until blended. Leave to stand for 10 minutes until thick, then stir in the coconut oil, coconut milk and vanilla.
- 4 Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. The mixture will be thick. Gently fold in the coconut and the blackberries.
- 5 Spoon into the paper cases and bake for 15-20 minutes, until golden and a skewer inserted into one of the cakes comes out clean. Place on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 For the soya cream, mix together the soya yoghurt and icing sugar in a pan.
- 7 Mix the cornflour with the water to a paste and stir into the yoghurt mixture. Heat, stirring and bring to a boil. Simmer gently, stirring until thick. Stir in the vanilla.
- 8 Put into a bowl and cover with clingfilm, placing it directly on the surface of the cream. Chill for at least 2 hours.
- 9 Spoon into a piping bag with a shell nozzle and pipe on top of the cakes. Sprinkle with toasted coconut and decorate with a blackberry on top.



Dairy-free cocoa cupcakes with bananas

By Veronica Lavenia

Makes 10-12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

75g (3oz) dairy-free dark chocolate

5 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil (or 7 tbsp organic cold-pressed sunflower oil)

125g (4½oz) rice malt

50g (2oz) organic banana yoghurt

50ml (2fl oz) organic rice milk, at room temperature
a pinch of sea salt

250g (9oz) brown rice flour, sifted

15g (½oz) organic baking powder

1 tsp raw cocoa powder

2 large bananas

juice of 1 lemon

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with cupcake cases.
- 2 Melt the chocolate in a double boiler and let cool. Mix the oil with the rice malt.
- 3 Add one mashed banana, melted chocolate, yoghurt and milk. Add the sifted flour with the baking powder, cocoa and sea salt.
- 4 Cut the other banana into slices and drizzle with lemon juice.
- 5 Pour the dough into cups or ramekins, add one or two slices of banana on top of each small cake.
- 6 Bake for 20 minutes.



The recipes on pages 106-108 are taken from *The Rustic Italian Bakery* by Veronica Lavenia, published by New Holland Publishers, RRP £16.99.

Gluten-free marble cupcakes

By Veronica Lavenia
Makes 10-12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 1 large beaten free-range egg
- 150g (5oz) rice malt
- 1 tsp organic vanilla 'Bourbon' powder
- a pinch of sea salt
- 2 tbsp vanilla yoghurt
- 75ml (3fl oz) mild extra virgin olive oil or 100ml (3½fl oz) organic cold-pressed sunflower oil
- 200g (9oz) white rice flour, sifted
- 50g (2oz) brown rice flour, sifted
- 1 tsp gluten-free organic baking powder
- 2 tbsp warm water
- 3 tbsp cocoa powder

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with cupcake cases.
- 2 Mix the beaten egg with the rice malt, vanilla, salt, yoghurt and olive oil. Add the flours, baking powder and warm water. Pour half of the mixture into muffin moulds and set aside.
- 3 Add the cocoa powder to the rest of the mixture and pour over the white dough. Bake for 15 minutes.



Fig cupcakes

By Veronica Lavenia

Makes 10-12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

200g (7oz) dried figs

50ml (2fl oz) warm organic milk

50g (2oz) malt

1 large free-range egg, separated

a pinch of sea salt

75ml (3fl oz) mild extra-virgin olive oil or 100ml (3½fl oz) organic cold-pressed sunflower oil

250g (9oz) wholemeal Kamut flour, sifted

1 tsp vanilla powder 'Bourbon'

15g (½oz) organic baking powder

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.
- 2** Cut the figs coarsely and mix with hot milk and malt.
- 3** Beat the egg yolks with the oil and a pinch of salt. Add the sifted flour, vanilla and the baking powder; mix well to combine. Whip the egg whites until stiff and, when ready, gently add them to the dough. Add the fig mixture.
- 4** Finally, pour the mixture into the cases.
- 5** Bake for 20 minutes.



Gianduja cupcakes

By Veronica Lavenia

Makes 8-10

FOR THE CUPCAKES

250g (9oz) brown rice flour, sifted

1 tsp organic baking powder

1 tbsp raw cocoa powder

a pinch of sea salt

100g (3½oz) rice malt

75g (3oz) dark chocolate

200g (7oz) Italian Gianduja chocolate (or a high quality milk chocolate at room temperature)

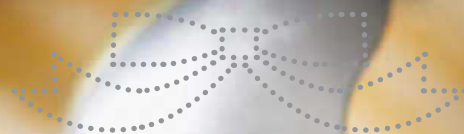
1 large beaten free-range egg

60ml (2½fl oz) organic rice milk, at room temperature

60ml (2½fl oz) mild extra-virgin olive oil or 75ml (3fl oz) organic cold-pressed sunflower oil

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.
- 2** In a bowl, sift together the brown rice flour, organic baking powder, rice malt, cocoa powder and a pinch of sea salt, then set aside. Melt the dark and Gianduja chocolate in a bain-marie. Once the chocolate has cooled, add it to the beaten egg, milk and oil and stir. Combine with the dry ingredients and stir quickly until the mixture forms a light whipping cream.
- 3** Pour the mixture into the paper cases and bake for 15 minutes.

Mug CAKES





Nutella mug cake

Makes 1 mugcake

FOR THE MUG CAKE

- 4 tbsp self-raising flour
- 4 tbsp sugar
- 1 free-range egg
- 3 tbsp cocoa powder
- 3 tbsp Nutella
- 3 tbsp milk
- 3 tbsp sunflower oil

FOR THE SAUCE

- 50g (1¾oz) Nutella
- 25ml (1 fl oz) milk

TO DECORATE

- chopped hazelnuts

- 1 Lightly grease a large microwaveable mug.
- 2 Whisk together all the ingredients until combined.
- 3 Pour the mixture into the mug, leaving plenty of room for rising.
- 4 Microwave on high for 1½-3 minutes until firm.
- 5 For the sauce, whisk together the Nutella and milk. Microwave for about 30 seconds on high until melted. Whisk lightly and return to the microwave for up to 1 minute until smooth. Pour over the top of the cake.
- 6 Decorate with chopped hazelnuts.

TIP Microwave cooking times vary widely, so the cake needs to be watched all the time as it cooks. Depending on your microwave it could be ready in 1 minute or it could take 3 minutes.



Pear and white chocolate mug cake

Makes 1 mug cake

FOR THE MUG CAKE

- ½ pear, peeled and cored
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 free-range egg
- 2 tbsp caster sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp single cream
- 6 tbsp plain flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 30g (1oz) butter, melted

FOR THE WHITE CHOCOLATE SAUCE

- 6 squares of white chocolate
- 2 tbsp single cream

TO DECORATE

- chopped pistachios

- 1 Cook the pear in the water for 70 seconds (800 watts) in a microwaveable bowl, then drain.
- 2 In a large microwaveable mug, beat in one by one the egg, sugar, vanilla, cream, flour, baking powder and melted butter.
- 3 Push in the half pear.
- 4 Cook in the microwave for 1 minute 40 seconds (800 watts).
- 5 For the white chocolate sauce, place the white chocolate and cream in a microwaveable bowl or jug and melt for about 30 seconds (800 watts). Remove and stir. If it is too thick, return to the microwave for a further 10 seconds.
- 6 Pour the sauce over the cake and sprinkle with pistachios.



Rhubarb pistachio mug cakes

Makes 2 mug cakes

FOR THE MUG CAKES

30g (1oz) chopped rhubarb

2 tbsp butter

6 tbsp plain flour

a pinch of bicarbonate of soda

50g (1½oz) sugar

1 large free-range egg, beaten

3 tbsp milk

2 tsp pistachios

- 1 Put the rhubarb and butter in a microwaveable bowl and cook for 30-40 seconds (800 watt) until softened. Set aside.
- 2 Mix together the flour, bicarbonate of soda, sugar and rhubarb in a bowl.
- 3 Add the egg and milk and mix well.
- 4 Divide between two large microwaveable mugs. Sprinkle with the pistachios.
- 5 Microwave separately for 1½-3 minutes each (800 watt) until risen and firm.

TIP Microwave cooking times vary widely so the cake needs to be watched all the time as it cooks. Depending on your microwave it could be ready in 1 minute or it could take up to 3 minutes.



Banana, apple and peanut mug crumble

Makes 1 mug crumble

FOR THE MUG CRUMBLE

1 apple, peeled, cored and diced

1 tbsp caster sugar

½ banana, sliced into rounds

1 heaped tbsp peanut butter

1 tbsp chopped roasted and salted peanuts

15g (½oz) butter

1 tbsp soft brown sugar

2 heaped tbsp peanut butter

2 heaped tbsp plain flour

- 1 In a mug, cook the apple with the sugar in the microwave for 1 minute at 800 watts or 50 seconds at 1,000 watts, covering the mug with clingfilm pierced several times. Pour off any excess liquid. Add the banana and the peanut butter and stir.
- 2 In a bowl, mix the butter, soft brown sugar, peanut butter, flour and peanuts with your fingertips to form a dough.
- 3 Crumble it into the mug and cook in the microwave for 1 minute at 800 watts or 50 seconds at 1,000 watts.

TIP Let it cool a little before eating.

This recipe and those on page 112 are taken from *Mug Crumbles* by Christell Huet-Gomez, photography by David Japy, published by Hardie Grant, RRP £7.99.





Vanilla, apple and chocolate mug crumble

Makes 1 mug crumble

FOR THE MUG CRUMBLE

- 2 apples, peeled, cored and diced**
- 1 tbsp vanilla caster sugar**
- a knob of butter**
- 2 tbsp dark chocolate chips**
- 15g (½oz) butter**
- 1 tbsp soft brown sugar**
- 2 tsp natural vanilla extract**
- 2 heaped tbsp plain flour**
- a pinch of salt**

- 1** In a mug, mix the apple with the sugar and knob of butter. Cover the mug with clingfilm pierced several times.
- 2** Cook in the microwave for 2 minutes at 800 watts or 1 minute 30 seconds at 1,000 watts. Pour off any excess liquid. Add the chocolate chips and stir again.
- 3** In a bowl, mix the butter, soft brown sugar, vanilla, flour and salt with your fingertips to form a dough.
- 4** Crumble it into the mug and cook in the microwave for 1 minute at 800 watts or 50 seconds at 1,000 watts.

TIP Let it cool a little before eating.



Pear and chocolate mug crumble

Makes 1 mug crumble

FOR THE MUG CRUMBLE

- 2 pears, peeled, cored and diced**
- 1 tbsp caster sugar**
- a knob of butter**
- 1 tbsp dark chocolate chips**
- 15g (½oz) butter**
- 1 tbsp soft brown sugar**
- 3 heaped tbsp plain flour**
- 1 tbsp dark chocolate**
- a pinch of salt**

- 1** In a mug, mix the pear with the sugar and knob of butter. Cover the mug with clingfilm pierced several times.
- 2** Cook in the microwave for 1 minute at 800 watts or 50 seconds at 1,000 watts. Pour off any excess liquid. Add the chocolate chips and stir again.
- 3** In a bowl, mix the butter, soft brown sugar, flour, chocolate and salt with your fingertips to form a dough.
- 4** Crumble it into the mug and cook in the microwave for 1 minute at 800 watts or 50 seconds at 1,000 watts.

TIP Let it cool a little before eating.

Basic vanilla cupcakes

By Trudy Mitchell from JellyCake (www.jellycake.co.uk)

Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

150g (5½oz) unsalted butter, softened

150g (5½oz) caster sugar

½ tsp vanilla extract

3 large free-range eggs

150g (5½oz) self-raising flour

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

150g (5½oz) unsalted butter, softened

300g (1 lb) icing sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4, and line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases. Place the butter, sugar and vanilla in a mixing bowl. Beat the mixture by hand or using an electric hand whisk until it becomes very light and fluffy.
- 2** Lightly beat the eggs in a jug, then slowly add to the mix, with the mixer on medium speed, beating well between each addition. If the mixture starts to curdle, add a spoonful of the flour.
- 3** Sift the flour into the bowl, then fold in using a metal spoon until just combined.
- 4** Evenly spoon or scoop the mixture into the paper cases. Bake the cupcakes in the oven for approximately 18-20 minutes, until the sponge springs back when touched and a skewer inserted into the centre of one of the cupcakes comes out clean.
- 5** Remove the tin from the oven. Leave the cupcakes to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6** To make the buttercream, place the softened butter, icing sugar and vanilla together in a bowl and mix together slowly using an electric whisk. Once the ingredients are starting to combine, turn up the speed and beat until very light and fluffy.
- 7** Using a nozzle and piping bag of your choice, fold the top of the piping bag down over your hand and carefully spoon the buttercream into the bag.
- 8** Pipe swirls of buttercream onto the top of each cupcake. For smooth iced cupcakes, you don't need a piping bag – simply spoon a little buttercream on top of the cupcake and smooth over using a spatula.

TIP To make chocolate cupcakes, substitute 25g (1oz) cocoa powder for an equal quantity of flour. To make chocolate buttercream, substitute 25g (1oz) cocoa powder for an equal quantity of icing sugar.



BAKED BY YOU



Elaine Graham

"These were recent cupcakes I made when my grandmother requested them as a gift for her best friend's surprise 70th birthday party."



**Sophie Murray
from Stevenage**

"I made these for my daughter's second birthday. She loves my baking books and kept asking me for 'the piggy cakes'. She was extremely happy with her own piggy cupcake!"



**Kerrie Garland
from Norwich**

"Here's a cupcake dress made for my daughter's 8th birthday. All the cupcakes were salted caramel flavour."



Claire Turner from Bristol

"Here are my bathing frogs cupcakes. I made these for work in honour of our team's frog mascot, Riberto."

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Cathy Featherstone from Sheerness, Kent

"I made these cupcakes for my work colleagues when we were doing stocktake. Half are chocolate and cherry and half are lemon and white chocolate flavoured."

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!

If you'd like us to feature your cupcakes in the Baked By You section of the next *Cupcake Heaven*, just send your high-resolution photos to cupcakeheaven@anthem-publishing.com. Please include your name, home town and a little bit about the cupcakes you've made.

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